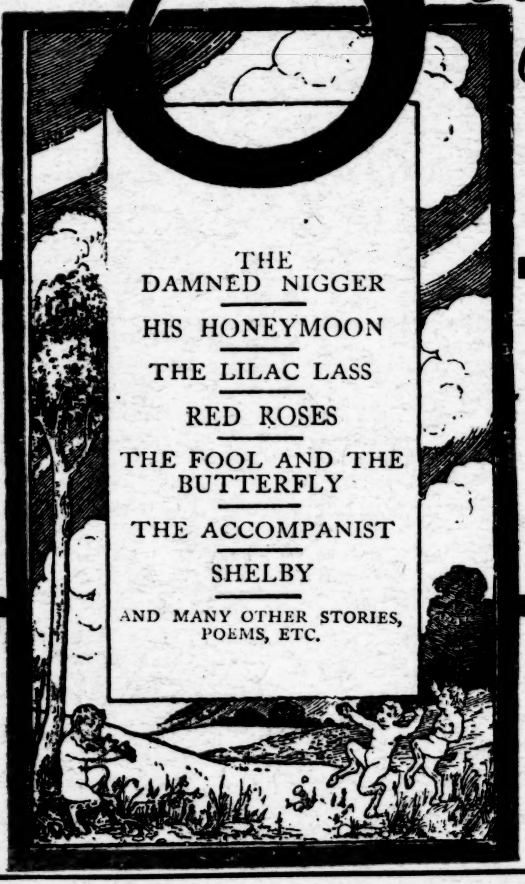
THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse. Not to Instruct



THE DAMNED NIGGER

HIS HONEYMOON

THE LILAC LASS

RED ROSES

THE FOOL AND THE BUTTERFLY

THE ACCOMPANIST

SHELBY

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, ETC.

OCTOBER 1920

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. MILNE

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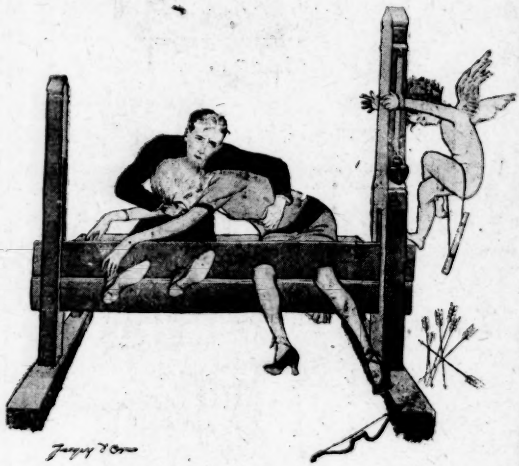
MY SLEEPING PARTNER

By H. DENNIS BRADLEY.



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OF course, we all know that war makes strange bedfellows. But what I now awaken to is that Peace has thrust upon me a sleeping partner for whom I possess a physical and mental aversion.

My sleeping partner is an octopus from whose stifling embrace I can find no escape. One whose everlasting proximity is nauseating, whose rapacity is disgusting, whose clutch is corrupting, and whose insensate squandering of the result of my toil is ruinous.

One who, when awake, keeps appalling company, revels in dissolute circles and extols wanton extravagance as a virtue.

And when asleep, whose sleep is so deadly that I can awaken her to no reason, no logic, no intelligence, no vision, no understanding.

For years my partner has been surrounded by multitudes of sycophants and parasites. And always these myriads of unproductive drones are egging her on to fresh excesses.

What am I to do? There is but one thing left. To kill this blighting influence whilst she is in a drunken stupor.

* * * *

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Now I am merely a junior partner in the business I own, and the only thing uncontrolled is my temper.

My sleeping partner is an anomaly, for though she sleeps she has put no capital into my business, and yet takes the bulk of the profits out of it. Which savours of financial genius . . . or crookery.

The name of my sleeping partner is as well known as mine . . . and even more hated. Her initials are E.P.D.

Out of every £1,000 she takes about £750 to my £250. She leaves me barely enough to exist, and gambles away her treble portion in profligacy.

That is the position. . . . And all young businesses are alike saddled with this nightmare partner. They can neither progress nor develop, because all Incentive has been killed.

* * * * * * * * *

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Vol. LXII OCTOBER, 1920 No. 2

THE DAMNED NIGGER

By Emanie N. Sachs

I

"HAVE you brought me my hot-water bottle, 'Lizbeth Ann?" the woman called from her bed. It was a large mahogany four-poster, a relic of better days, and seemed to point in scorn to the dingy, greenish brown wall-paper that surrounded it. No more did its upper frame enclose snowy pleated white muslin. It yawned, an open cavity, through which could be seen a fly-specked ceiling—once white, but now spotted with the leaks of numerous rains.

"Coming, mother," answered a patient, quiet voice. A careful listener could have detected an undertone of persistent youth.

'Lizbeth Ann held the water-bottle to her cheek to test its warmth, as she came into the room. She was a colourless little person, with regular features, mouth a trifle small, and chin receding slightly, in the graceful profile line of a Botticelli Madonna. Her eyes were nice and brown. She made one think irresistibly of a white waxen candle that has yet to be touched by a match before it melts into flame.

"Are you sure you don't mind my going, mother? Jemmy will come right back after taking me to the Temples'. He'll stay in the kitchen until time to fetch me home. He'll really be within call, almost all the time. But—if you are the least bit nervous, I won't—"

"I guess I'll be all right," interrupted Mrs. Munford. "A mother is called upon to make sacrifices every day of the year. You're twenty-five now, and I didn't like the way Sarah Temple talked about never seeing you around with the young people. 'Tisn't likely you'd be asked to the subscription dances, where a boy has to pay to take a girl—you might as well enjoy the invited kind, where it's nothing to talk about if nobody sees you home. I can remember the time when they couldn't have a dance in Bingham County without a Munford planning everything from the punch to the music, but times have changed."

Mrs. Munford sighed voluminously and stretched her thin feet to meet the comforting warmth of the hot-water bottle.

"Just hand me my spectacles and the

Christian Times and fix the light so it shines over my left shoulder. Lands! Jemmy will have to fix this table again. It will hardly hold the lamp."

"Is that all, mother?"

The girl paused in the doorway. Her newly laundered organdie—a hand-me-down from a prosperous Louisville cousin—showed stiff angles in the dim light.

"Good-night, dear. I won't wake you when I come in."

She fixed the door so it would stay slightly ajar.

"Jem," she called, "I'm ready. I'll get my coat in the hall as we go out."

"Yas'm, Miss 'Lizbeth Ann. I'se ready. Come on, chile, so's I kin git back ter yo' maw."

Jem hurried out in the hall, a slender, wiry negro, with the high cheek bones and wide-apart brown eyes of his race. His hair was short and kinky, but his mouth and nose were not in the generous proportions of the negro who runs true to type.

Jem had joined the Munford household when its prosperity was already on the wane. Colonel Munford had succumbed to the proverbial handsome stranger selling bogus mining certificates and was trying to preserve the remains of the family fortune in alcohol, taken inwardly. The servants having departed unpaid, Mrs. Munford welcomed the little negro boy who came to the back door one day suggesting that he work for his food and lodging. Jemmy was an orphan with no family ties, and quickly adopted the Munford clan. He proved to be slave, guide, philosopher, and friend to 'Lizbeth Ann. He saved her life one day, when she waded out beyond her depth and his in Bracken Creek. As neither knew how to swim, perhaps a kindly current should have received its share of the gratitude that was bestowed upon Jemmy when he staggered under the weight of the wet, limp little bundle that he handed to the mother. He was Mrs. Munford's only assistant in nursing Colonel Munford through his last illness. He had an amazing pride in "Us Munfords," and laughed to scorn the more opulent negroes who jeered at his willingness to stay in a sinking ship, when so many thriving yachts were to be boarded for the asking.

"Yas, yo' gits high wages wukin' fo' white trash. I'd ruther wuk fo' a Munford, *I* had! I ain't no need tuh wear no swell braggin' clothes. I'se a Munford, I is somebody. I don' have ter put on fine clothes ter make folks think I've jes arrived at bein' somebody!" he would say.

"Honey, yo' don' mind walkin' a little faster. I don' wan' yo' maw ter git fidgety—'cos I don' wan' her ter have no unpleasant memories of this time ter make her say no, nex' time."

"There won't be many next times, Jemmy," said 'Lizbeth Ann. "I was only asked to fill in to-night. So many girls went to the house-party in Perkinsville, there weren't enough girls to go around. Mary Hayes got her invitation a week before mine came."

"Now, don' you talk that way. How many times have I tole you—youse a Munford, daughter of Colonel Henry Amos Munford, the last Munford in Bingham County. Here we are now. Have a good time and catch the best beau going."

And Jem held the big iron gate open for 'Lizbeth Ann to walk through and then turned and went off in a fast trot down the dusty road.

The girl stopped a moment, in the shadows of the double line of sugar maples that skirted the brick walk leading to the fine old Colonial house. There was a hopeless look in her brown eyes. Then her head went up, her shoulders back, and she continued on her way.

Mrs. Temple was standing by the door.

"Howdy, 'Lizbeth Ann," she welcomed cordially. "How's your mother? So glad you could come."

She looked at the clock and then at 'Lizbeth Ann, who, true to wallflower traditions, had come five minutes ahead of time.

Soon the young people began to arrive, a laughing, bantering group. 'Liz-

beth Ann was pushed back in a corner, where she found Mrs. Temple's mother watching the festivities with a benignant smile. The orchestra began playing and old Mrs. Enderson tapped her foot in strict time with the music. The couples swung out upon the shining floor.

None of the young men noticed 'Lizbeth Ann Munford. Ralph Gayle came toward their corner and smiled a greeting and the girl started forward on her chair in eager expectancy, but he went blithely past to a red-haired girl on the other side. Several extra men were standing around. They looked at 'Lizbeth Ann as if she were part of the furniture and went into the library to smoke. She began to talk very animatedly to old Mrs. Enderson, while she watched the other girls accept more partners than they could manage. Some of them were interrupted time after time by men "breaking in."

And so the evening passed. Every now and then someone would start toward them, but his destination was always elsewhere. Mrs. Enderson went to bed and 'Lizbeth Ann wandered over to the window to look for Jemmy. Late in the evening she had one dance. Nell Grace's husband, famous for his clumsy feet, had been refused by all the other girls.

"Did yo have a good time, Mis' 'Lizbeth Ann?" asked Jemmy on the way home.

"No, Jemmy. No one wants to dance with me. I had a miserable time—just miserable—"

There was a catch in her voice. "I know it's silly to care, but I c-can't help it."

"There, there, Honey, you wait. White men's jes' like sheep. Long some 'un'll come and fin' out how beautiful yo' is and every one of 'em 'll break they necks ter foller. Jes' yo' wait. You ain't no flashy kind to 'tract every Tom, Dick, an' Harry!"

II

A FEW weeks later, when 'Lizbeth Ann received an invitation to the Gayles' dance she told her mother that she did not want to go.

"They don't want me, mother. I don't fit in. I belong here—taking care of you."

"Nonsense! You are growing into an old maid. The Munfords have always married early and well. You've been sticking around the house too much. Of course you had to take care of your mother and you haven't been able to gad about, but I haven't had a heart attack this spring and I don't want to listen to any more of Sarah Temple's insinuations."

Cousin Alice Clayton, in Louisville, had been unusually generous. There was a yellow chiffon that suited 'Lizbeth Ann wonderfully. It softened all the angles and brought out the tenderness of her brown eyes and the sheen of her light brown hair. 'Lizbeth Ann nodded approvingly at her reflection in the large mirror in the Gayles' front hall. However, there were no approving glances from anyone else. No one was in the habit of noticing her. She looked around for a secluded corner. There were two or three girls talking excitedly in front of her.

"Who is he? He's marvellous looking!"

'Lizbeth Ann looked too. He was handsome, a tall, dark stranger, talking gracefully to Mrs. Gayle.

"I know who he is. He's a lawyer for the Grantland estate, and he's from New York. His name is Roger Dane, and he's going to be down here for several months. Isn't it great to have a brand-new man in town!" gurgled Marion Post, a plump partridge of a girl, with glistening eyes.

But the Ugly Duckling carried away the Prince, to the utter amazement of the company and the utterest amazement of the Ugly Duckling herself.

He began by asking Mrs. Gayle to introduce him to the little daffodil-girl in yellow, and taking hold of her programme, he covered it with bold black crosses. Jemmy's prophecy came true and 'Lizbeth Ann was almost the belle of the evening. No more did she search

in vain for something—anything—to say, while her mind felt like lumpy white wool. She found that she could talk and laugh about nothing as well as the rest of them. Her feet no longer dragged in miserable fear that she was taking the wrong steps, but all the time she was dancing with Ralph Gayle, and Henry Temple and Wallace Enderson, she was watching the Prince, and, curiously enough, he seemed to be watching her. Their eyes met over their partners' shoulders; her face was softly flushed continuously.

As it grew later, he said:

"Come out on the porch and look at the moon with me. We rarely see the moon in New York."

"Yes, but you see bright lights and people. We get a little tired of the moon, here. I'd like to see Broadway and traffic policemen, and things."

"I think we'll do without the traffic policemen. You're likely to see them at the wrong time. I'd like to show you Broadway at night and Fifth Avenue in the day-time. But, now you must show me every nook and cranny of Sunnydale."

'Lizbeth Ann didn't answer, but if the moonlight had been less mellow and more brilliant, Roger Dane would have seen swift tears in her eyes: the kind of illogical tears that fill the eyes of happy women who are seeing their dreams begin to come true.

People were starting to leave. They could hear Mrs. Gayle saying many times over, "So glad you came. So glad you enjoyed it," and different voices repeating, "Such a lovely party," or "I had such a good time."

And then, a couple who didn't see them in the recess of the porch, commented on the event of the evening.

"Say, Sue, what did you think of 'Lizbeth Ann Munford running away with the prize beau? Reckon you girls are jealous. But, oh boy—that girl looked pretty to-night! Funny none of us ever noticed it before. She's such a quiet little thing."

"Well, I must say I don't begrudge him to her. Poor girl, she's had an awful life, waiting on her mother hand and foot and never a bit of fun."

"Still, I've seen her at dances."

"Yes, sitting by herself, or with the chaperones, in hideous dresses that took away every trace of good looks. I never saw her in yellow before, and I am going to—"

They had moved off, in the distance, and 'Lizbeth Ann was looking at Roger Dane in miserable silence.

"Isn't it funny," he said, "how true the old saying is about prophets in their own country? I never saw a small town yet that didn't overlook its one best bet."

Jemmy came around the side of the house, and stood respectfully within call.

The girl jumped up from her chair.

"There's Jemmy; he's come to take me home, Mr. Dane."

"Suppose we send your factotum on ahead. It's a shame to miss this gorgeous moonlight. Hey, George," he called, "I'm going to take Miss Munford home. You run on ahead and here's something for your trouble."

Jemmy, coming early, had heard the kitchen gossip about the hit his young mistress was making with the New York man, and had been largely superior about it.

"Huh," he had remarked to the Gayle butler. "Since all this po' white trash has sprung up round heah lak toadstools, they ain't none of 'em quality enough to 'preciate a Munford. Takes a sho' 'nough pusson from New Yawk to do that. Jes' you wait."

Secure in the knowledge that Miss 'Lizbeth Ann was coming into her own at last, he set off down the road jingling his coin and singing in a minor key:

"Some folks say the Dummy can't run,
But, jes lemme tell yo' what the Dummy done done,
It left St. Louis at half-past one,
And got to Nashville 'fore the settin' o' the sun,
Oh, the Dummy, Oh—Oh—the Dummy—"

III

And thus began a harvest time for 'Lizbeth Ann. All the bitter, colourless years were soon forgotten. There was no more sitting in secluded corners at dances, unless she and Roger Dane chose to keep themselves in a dark niche of the porch. They were occasionally interrupted by Ralph Gayle, who was seeing a new and fascinating person in the yellow-garbed, brilliant-eyed 'Lizbeth Ann.

Yellow organdie and yellow cotton dress-lengths were ordered and sent to the old Munford place, for 'Lizbeth Ann almost superstitiously clung to the colour which shed a glow that made her lovely to the man she patently adored. Fortunately, it was summer, and summer materials were cheap.

Mrs. Munford was holding up her head again and even forgot to need her hot-water bag of nights. She could patronize Sarah Temple now, and tell about her daughter's friend from New York, and lightly mention the difficulty of keeping orchids fresh, when they were sent all the way from Cincinnati. One day it became too much for Sarah Temple and she asked, ever so sweetly:

"When are they going to be married?"

But Mrs. Munford airily replied:

"Oh, not for some time yet. I have told my daughter to prolong this beautiful period of courtship as far as possible. The serious business of life comes only too quickly."

"Well, of course I never listen to servants' gossip, but my Aunt Pride's son is the porter at the hotel now, and he says he carries letters in a woman's handwriting to Mr. Dane, and they are postmarked New York."

"My dear Sarah, surely a man who is away from home may be expected to receive letters from a mother or a sister?"

"Y-es," assented Mrs. Temple dubiously.

When she left, however, Mrs. Munford called 'Lizbeth Ann in from the sewing-room, where the steady whirr of a sewing-machine testified to her absorption.

"I want to speak to you, my dear, dear little girl. I am very much impressed with Mr. Dane. He appears to be all a loving mother could desire. I hate to think of my baby daughter leaving her mother, although it will be only for the honeymooning time; I intend always to bless your home. But, now tell your own mother, has—has he spoken?"

'Lizbeth Ann had in her hands a flounce of yellow muslin, from which she was removing basting threads, as she stood in front of her mother.

She twisted one corner into a tight little wad. Her eyes filled with tears. She winked them madly and digging her finger-nails into the palms of her hands, she finally conquered.

"Why, mother, I hadn't thought, yet—it's only been a few months, since I've known him. He seems to care—lots—but—"

"There now, there's plenty of time! I got a letter this morning from Aunt Lucy Clayton in Louisville. She wants me to come up and pay her a visit for a few days. Jemmy can sleep in the attic room again. I haven't been there this year and we must think ahead—wedding presents, you know," and Mrs. Munford cackled importantly.

The night after she left proved to be one of those magical nights when the moon is at its fullest and the trees look black in contrast. Silver paths seemed to be leading straight to heaven. Roger Dane and 'Lizbeth Ann were sitting out on the porch, saying very little, but their silence was quivering with wonderful things unsaid. Their chairs were close and Roger quietly covered her hand in his, and they sat there for a few minutes—still—and then he murmured:

"Dearest, you look like the lady out of the moon in that yellow dress. You wonderful, wonderful girl! I love you so much, much, much, sweetheart. Do you care, just a tiny bit?"

"Not a tiny bit, but ever and ever so much!"

He started to draw her to him, when

the telephone, which is no respecter of occasions, rang out in a shrill clang.

She came back breathless from hurrying.

"It was Ralph Gayle, he wanted us to meet him at the old bridge for a midnight picnic. I told him you'd be here this evening. Just think, it is ten o'clock already."

"Do you want to go?"

"No," she answered shyly, "I think I like it here."

Just then a cricket chirped near by and 'Lizbeth Ann, startled, gave a little cry. Roger Dane drew her to him in a close embrace, so close that she could hardly breathe, but she was past caring for anything but the wonderful kisses that came faster, faster, on her willing lips, each one thrilling to the depths of her being. Surely, she had all her life been waiting for just this.

It grew later and later.

Upstairs, Jemmy, stirring uneasily on his cot in the attic room awakened, when he heard a cock crow, raucously. Little waves of light were shooting up in the east. He yawned and stretched himself and went to the window. He could just see the far end of the front porch below. He started in surprise when he saw a man's hat on the bench, recognizable as Mr. Dane's.

"Must ha' forgotten it," he mumbled to himself. "It's funny, though."

He peered out the little dormer window again. The hat was gone and there were echoes of departing footsteps on the gravel walk.

'Lizbeth Ann was late in coming down for breakfast, and she did not greet Jemmy with customary cheer. Her "Good-morning" had no lilt to it. He looked at her anxiously and brightened when he saw the porter from the Lanston Hotel, where Dane was staying, coming up the steps with a fat-looking letter. Jem could see a familiar handwriting, having often, with a delighted grin, delivered neat little notes from that source to his young mistress. The messenger followed him into the dining-room.

"Howdy, Miss 'Lizbeth Ann. Kin I hav' some o' thet hot coffee? Ain't had time for to hav' no brekfus'—bin helpin' Mr. Dane pack. He done left on the ten o'clock train, he did."

"Left—ten o'clock train—"

Her face turned dead-white and her eyes made Jemmy shiver.

He turned to the boy and said:

"Come on ter the kitchen, nigger. I'll fill yo' big mouth. Guess Mr. Dane done gone ter Louisville ter git one of them fine presents he's been sendin' Miss 'Lizbeth Ann. He has to s'lect gifts in pusson fo' a Munford!"

'Lizbeth Ann slowly walked up the stairs to her room. She opened the door and turned the key in the lock and sat down in the little rocking-chair of which she had been so proud on her tenth birthday. There was the letter. She hadn't opened it yet and it was very thick. A little crooning moan escaped her, and then she tore open the envelope.

"*Dear, dear little Girl,*" she read, "*How can I ever make you understand? I want you to know that I meant no harm and first of all you must realize that I love you and that is everything, isn't it?*

"*You see, little girl, I'm married. I might as well blurt it out, like that. She doesn't brag about it, my wife—she's too busy with clubs and uplifts and committees. She wouldn't dream of coming away with me on these trips, and sometimes I get so lonesome that life doesn't seem worth living.*

"*That first night, at the dance, when I saw you—sweet and fresh as a daffodil—the first ones in the Spring, in the florists' windows in New York, crowding the orchids out of sight—well, you seemed like something especially sent. A man needs a woman's influence, and my wife—what's the use, we might as well leave her out of this. When I realized that, in Sunnydale, they hadn't seen the wonder of you yet, I thought it would be a joke to wake them up. Good Samaritan stuff; how the gods must have laughed.*

"*Our walks and drives and talks grew more and more wonderful and you—Heart-O'-Mine. You know I have*

grown to love you. Your eyes, the way your chin tilts—the adorable lift to your eyebrows when you are surprised—but there—I mustn't go on like this, I mustn't think of that last wonderful night, when you proved your love, when the magic—

"Catherine, my wife, will greet me, when I get back to New York, with a cool, dutiful kiss, and I will go about my work and my heart will throb painfully with longing—for you—my dear little Daffodil-girl, and my great hope is that you will forgive—for to love is to forgive. My dear, my dear.

"ROGER."

'Lizbeth Ann put her hand to her throat. It ached dully. Her brain was whirling. She walked over to the window, stumbling over a chair.

"Forgive," she muttered, tonelessly. "Forgive—oh—my God!" And then she murmured wistfully, "If I could only cry—it might help to cry."

There was a knock at the door, gentle and persistent. Jemmy with a yellow envelope—a telegram.

"Ne'mine—Honey—I'll open it fo' yo'—don' yo' bother."

Her hands were trembling so that she could not get a proper hold on the paper.

Jemmy opened it and held it in front of her eyes.

The black letters danced and glittered. It was hard for her eyes to focus. Finally the words shaped themselves and she read:

"Your mother passed away quietly this morning—heart failure—am coming. Aunt Lucy."

'Lizbeth Ann crumpled slowly and mercifully into a little heap on the floor.

IV

AUNT LUCY wanted to take 'Lizbeth Ann back to Louisville, but she stubbornly refused, and the family doctor advised letting things alone for a while.

"I don't like the looks of it," he said. "'Lizbeth Ann has never cried and that's a bad sign. Tears that fall inward make trouble. Let her stay in the old house for a few months. Jemmy will take care of her and housework is a good tonic. Maybe we'll find something else that will effect a cure." And the old doctor glanced significantly across the street where Ralph Gayle was passing by.

No one asked 'Lizbeth Ann about Roger Dane. People took it for granted that she had sent him away, and her mother's death occurring so suddenly hurled everyone's heart out to her in quick sympathy. Ralph Gayle was often seen on his way to and from the Munford place, and the village gossips smiled benignantly and waited for news.

'Lizbeth Ann went about her work mechanically, with a hunted expression in her eyes, keeping the old house scrupulously clean. One day she decided to straighten out the attic. In a corner, under the eaves, she found an old trunk and brushing off some sticky spider webs, she opened it. Inside, a pasteboard box disclosed an infant's layette of finest, softest white. Around the little garments was fastened a band of faded pink ribbon, upon which was pinned a label, "'Lizbeth Ann's outfit," written in her mother's handwriting. Each small article was carefully handmade, in the kind of tiny even stitches that show an accompaniment of happy dreams in the sewing.

'Lizbeth Ann put them gently back into the box and the trunk lid fell with a dull thud, which coincided with a wave of foreboding that came over her, a crystallization of her consuming fear.

"I am glad mother died," she whispered.

Her breath began to come in frightened pants.

The telephone rang out—homely, reassuring. Probably Ralph. Her face lighted and she rushed downstairs.

"Hello, this is Ralph. I'm coming to take you out for a little drive this afternoon. Will you go?"

"Yes," she answered faintly.

"I have something to tell you, something important. Can't be told over the 'phone. Oh, 'Lizbeth Ann, old Mr.

Harbisson says this is the earliest spring in the history of Sunnydale. We will try to find a pussywillow this afternoon, and before we know it the daffodils will be out. Do you know, I always call you my daffodil-girl to my—Hello—Hello—Central—you cut us off. Damn it! Please ring 402. They don't answer? The party cut off? That's funny, I'll have to see about it!"

A way out had occurred to 'Lizbeth Ann. Life was too big a battle for her to fight any longer. She went to the old desk in the corner and opened the drawer. There was the Colonel's ancient pistol of which her mother used to be afraid; still, she had always been too nervous to be without a loaded pistol in the house. It was unwieldy and heavy. 'Lizbeth Ann lifted it awkwardly and prayed a little. When she came to the word "Forgive" she muttered pitifully— "Dear God, can't you see? There's no other way. All the words haunt me—"

A shot rang out, bringing Jemmy running in from the garden.

"Lawdy, Miss 'Lizbeth Ann, Honey, what yo' done, what yo' done!"

His face was gray with terror, that sickly gray that only a black negro can turn.

'Lizbeth Ann was drawing back the hammer of the pistol for another trial. He caught hold of her bleeding arm and they struggled—drawing excited, sobbing breaths.

He tried in vain to unlock the slender fingers that clutched the handle of the gun. She fought him off with superhuman strength, tearing one sleeve out of her dress. Finally she managed to point the barrel at her heart. She pulled the trigger.

"No other way out, Jemmy—best—fix it—somehow—otherwise disgrace—you know—Roger"—and then the brown eyes took on a dreadful stare. There was a little click in the pretty white throat and that was all.

Jemmy knelt there, moaning and crying. Gradually he felt something warm and sticky flowing over his hands. Miss 'Lizbeth Ann's blood. He jumped up in utter terror. Someone was coming through the hall.

Ralph Gayle came into the room and saw the dead girl lying on the floor—in ghastly disarray—the pistol and Jemmy's blood-stained hands.

He put his own hands to his eyes first and tried not to look, and then his overwhelming grief lost itself in overwhelming rage.

"My God! You damned nigger!"

Jemmy shrank back before the awful accusation in the white man's eyes.

"Lawdy, Mr. Ralph, yo' don' think—yo' can't think that—that I—Lawdy—" and then those last words of 'Lizbeth Ann's rang in his ears—the last words of the last Munford—"Fix it—somehow—otherwise disgrace."

Ralph was feeling hopelessly for a pulse that was still.

Jemmy glanced out of the window. The sun was shining brightly and a bird came and perched on a branch near the window, and burst into a joyous song, a very pæan to the beauty of life. Then he glanced at the dead girl.

"Yassa, Massa, yassa, I'se a rotten nigger! Kill me, Massa! I 'ont want ter live noways!"

"I'd like to throttle you with my bare hands—*but we have a better way for your kind!* I'll be back for you."

Gayle turned the key in the lock as he went out to spread the news that one more negro had committed the crime unspeakable. And so it was written in the book of Fate that 'Lizbeth Ann Munford should go down in the annals of Sunnydale, not as a Magdalen, but as a martyr.

In that room of awful tragedy, Jemmy waited. The dead girl's eyes looked into his. He shut them gently, and over his face crept a look of brooding care.

"Ne'mine—Honey, I fixed it. Jemmy fixed it all right," he whispered.

Outside, he heard the gathering of men; gradually more and more were surrounding the house. There was the sound of many voices—voices loud, angry and excited, growing into the ominous roar of a mob, fully roused, growling for its prey.

THE LILAC LASS

By Stephen Ta Van

CHAPTER I

WHEN the French clock on the mantel in the second-story front room of the tall brick dwelling at Ninety-eight Standish Street struck the half-hour between five and six of the afternoon of May 13, 1911, John Hennion, the nominal owner, stood looking out through the large plate-glass pane of a north window, while in the chamber above—on a great carven bed befitting the birth, marriage, or mortal exit of a member of Ware's valid aristocracy—the physical remnant of his wife's mother, Madame Lucretia Kinnicutt, approached with painful slowness the relief from sentience which her aged mind had reached some days before, after a decade's gradual fading.

The exhausted organism's stertorous breathing, horribly familiar to all in the house, seemed to pierce the floor to Hennion's ears. His brain, alert but devoid of a sense of humour, heard it without pity or cynicism, but with a calm consideration, almost impersonal, that had come to characterize his attitude toward the aged lady, the strange and ironically dramatic turn her destiny had taken and the influence of her affairs upon his own.

He was a short, square and stocky man—"stugged" is the old New England word—with a well-shaped head and bulging calves. His age was fifty-six. Of philosophic and romantic tendencies his stolid exterior gave no hint, but he had them, and though they found slight expression in his daily life, they served as well-springs of vitality in a nature superior to the limited accomplishment to which, as his associates and he himself understood, the man was finally committed by age and circumstances.

A potential adventurer and brilliant engineer, he taught elementary geometry to boys at Ware. He had become a landmark, an institution on which the University could count with a trust tinged in the younger men by contempt for his lack of aptitude for advancement. Having no skill in acquaintance, he was misinterpreted by all except his friend Horace Ude, middle-aged son of Ware's richest man, who alone guessed the dreams that enabled him, a definitely placed assistant professor, and the head of a household which held for him no violent emotional possibilities, to keep green the garden of his soul.

To his wife, Alice, loving him placidly and depending on him with the justified confidence of years, he was a finished and stamped product, comfortably catalogued. Neither she nor their daughter Sheila realized the truth that he was very proud, sensitive, chivalrous—an apparently mechanical man, in fact capable of laying down his life for an idea or a woman.

To himself, he was by way of being what many Americans become, a suppressed chorus in the drama of womenfolk. Lacking the sense of humour, he was handicapped against easy success in orientation; but he was too intelligent to be vague, and in his solemn and slightly ponderous fashion he was in line to achieve a rhythmic relationship with his environment before old age could take him unaware.

His wife, after meeting him in the hall on his return from afternoon

classes, had accompanied him to the room which they still shared—matter-of-factly on her part, with a faint aversion on his—and had then continued up the stairs to the third floor, to her mother's chamber. He had asked if there was any change in the old lady's condition, and she had replied that there was very little.

"Doctor Munn says she's holding out wonderfully. Oh, John, she is so brave, and the doctor is so kind!"

She recited certain details of the physician's pronouncement. She believed with the queer ostrich-like devoutness of her traditions in the wisdom of doctors (if not too young), and of ministers, and in the constitutional moral uprightness of the class to which she referred as gentlemen.

Her husband never ceased to wonder at fresh evidences of a simplicity that could live in the same mind with much practical shrewdness, but he had learned not to argue. Even in the days of the alluring blonde gaiety that had deceived him concerning her intelligence, he had met interferences in her mental processes. Later he understood definitely that she was stupid, and the discovery was a tragedy.

Little by little, with a patience that was a monument to his love for her, he had built up a knowledge of her outlook, had even learned a smattering of the strange language of vanished Ware, full of references to Mrs. Simeon Gale and Cousin Lilah, and other worthies long defunct, by means of which she and her mother communicated with each other. Imperfectly he comprehended her superb love for her mother—a devotion so self-hypnotic that it could idealize into an exhibition of moral courage—the last convulsive resistance of aged flesh against the assault of death.

Her capacity for self-deception amazed him.

Years before, at the beginning of Madame Lucretia's débâcle, she had commenced the fiction, which may have seemed to her a fact, that her parent was not only "retaining all her faculties," but continuing to be an active personal influence in the family's affairs. She spoke importantly of mother and mother's thoughts and preferences, whereas to the uncoloured mind it was soon apparent that the real needs of the object of her love were limited to food and warmth, and the petting craved by a sick old child.

That fumbling frame, and the ruined face, like a bird's, without the dignity of judgment! How was it possible, he wondered, for her to lavish upon such a relic, however deserving of pity, an affection almost sublime? Her service sapped her strength; it was as though the older woman lived upon the younger's blood. He had trouble in viewing calmly the daily sacrifice, but a wrangle would only have grieved Alice. He was sure of her determination, and of the uselessness of protest.

His son, in Ware primarily on business, had suggested sending the ruin to a hospital.

"She wouldn't realize the difference," Malcolm Hennion said in his staccato voice that had a withering effect like a hot, dry wind. "She's no more than a stomach with limbs, poor old soul. She'd be much better off, and so would mother. Why don't you do it?"

"Because if I did, your mother would leave me."

He was conscious of the young man's amused contempt for the timidity which feared to disturb custom and habit, and the mingled comfort and annoyance of the long-established home.

Malcolm was of the nervous generation that lived in apartments and hotels, and seemed to shift its ways indifferently. What could he know of the desire for establishment? He would not feel the home-yearning unless he grew old, and that he would grow old was unlikely, for he was a mass of ailments and expensive habits. At various times he had cost his father heavily in pride and money—he was one of the crop of wild boys begotten by the old Ware Faculty—but he had finally obtained a grip on himself, and coincidentally on a phase of the sale of expensive editions on the instalment system. His salesmen

worked college towns profitably, and he came to Ware to follow them up. He had the qualities of his defects, one of them being an intellectual honesty admired by his father, when its violence was not too disconcerting.

"By the way, what about that *Cercle* business?" he asked, after being checked in his proposal to commit his grandmother to an institution. "It's a pity the old lady won't get a chance to cop, after holding out so long. How many of the brave little band of survivors are left? Not many, I should think."

"Only eight, I believe," said John.

"My God!" His son sat up with the gleam of the natural gambler in his cruel gray eyes. "But seven's the fatal number, isn't it? They split the pot when Number Eight goes."

"I believe so."

"What a shame! That little wad would have done mother a lot of good, and I suppose the old lady would have had the decency to will it to her, and not to the crazy cousins." The gleam died, his face assumed its customary mask, and with his long fingers, resembling those of Madame Lucretia herself, he rolled and lit a cigarette of specially fine-cut Virginia tobacco. "Think of it. Here you and mother have kept the old dame alive for God knows how many years, and she ups and dies just when she was going to be an heiress. What irony! And what a gorgeously wicked and barbaric thing the whole plan was."

He lapsed into silence, and his father read his thought correctly. Another might have believed him concerned with the loss of his own potential share of the vanishing heritage, but John knew that the hard mind was interested only analytically.

CHAPTER II

WIDELY divergent from his mother's people in mental gear and moral feeling, Malcolm Hennion would not have touched an inheritance coming from one of them.

In this perverse manner his Puritan strain declared itself as obstinately as any denominational guerilla's. His hatred of the Kinnicutt blood, which he held responsible for his weaker tendencies, made him scarcely less fanatical in his peculiar development of independence than were in an opposite direction, long before, the stiff-necked elders who journeyed perilously to a new land in search of freedom to conduct the worship of God in their own savage way, or their sons the Salem witch-finders, or their grandsons who in 1776 refused to submit to any oppression except one of their own choosing. The utter lack of harmony with his mother, dating from his early childhood, was typical of both natures. Each intensified the unpleasantness in the other, and the boy had grown up without experience in the lovely tenderness of the mother-and-son relation.

His father, inarticulate emotionally, had not learned to deal with him until late. Their relationship, difficult in its early stages, had developed into the commerce of wary friends, backed by sympathy and a mutual admiration of strength, which neither admitted directly to the other. Either would have gone to the stake in the other's place, the elder solemnly, the younger mockingly, and in effect their minds arrived at conclusions not dissimilar, allowing for the gap between their ages, and the peculiar experiences of each.

Thus to John Hennion also the plan of the *Cercle*, in which the life of Lucretia Kinnicutt was involved, appeared barbaric, though he saw it seriously and with less glitter. To poke fun at its victims seemed to him cruel, or at least a violation of natural good taste. He was not so bitterly sure of motives as his son, nor did he view actions by so merciless a light. Respect for life's dignity, and pity for the weakness of age, rather than regard for individuals, had kept him from telling Malcolm of a plot-development which would have struck from that electric brain a flash of mordant glee.

As he stood at the window, the *Cercle's* strange history, which Malcolm

knew quite well, ran through his considering mind in the form of a story, beginning with the importation from France, by a group of Ware's aristocrats, of the idea of gambling on the lives of children. It was in the days of bell-crowned hats and silk stocks, and his imagination painted the conspirators —among them a governor and an ex-minister to a Continental Power— elaborating the idea in a rich atmosphere of black walnut and port wine. They were later developments of Puritanism, proud, cynical, able; men who held themselves aloof from intimacy with their families, ruling rigidly, and stood up to pray in church, calling the Lord's attention to the honour they were paying Him. Though they were rabid Northerners they were related to Southern families, and some of them held slaves. They and their sons who later fought for the Union despised Wendell Phillips for a mountebank, a consorter with negroes. Abolition they accepted, but not equality. Theirs was the spirit of an intolerant hereditary nobility, magnificent and ridiculous by turns. They conducted the business of living with a mingling of lavish simplicity and restrained display, and to men of their oddly mixed temper, there was nothing incongruous or brutal in the idea of the *Cercle*.

The idea was the formation of a pool or stock company, in which each man of a limited aristocratic list of about two hundred invested a fixed sum, in the name of some living child. The child owned the share represented by the investment. The whole capital was to be employed and held together until such time as only seven shareholders—that is, seven of the children—remained alive, when the holdings of the company were to be sold and the entire proceeds divided among the lucky seven, who thus drew their prizes on the lottery system, with death making the drawings.

The thing was merely a gamble in longevity, and each gambler chose his youngest descendant to bet on. For the actual investment, a central piece of ground was bought and an office building put up, under the management of a Board of Trustees. Fire destroyed the first building, and it was replaced by one of modern Ware's largest business structures, know as the *Cercle* Building for half a century by thousands who passed and repassed its portals without a suspicion of the arrangement upon which its operation depended.

For many years, deaths among the *Cercle* shareholders attracted no special attention. The investors themselves departed at various times—their bodies, scarcely stiffer in *rigor mortis* than in daily action—to narrow houses in the grim Arch Street Cemetery, their spirits to whatever land such lordly spirits reached.

The babies in whose names the shares were taken pursued the common course of babies, and the list suffered from the usual percentage of mortality. The property was managed skilfully, and dividends were sometimes paid, but few reckoned the shares as assets. The War —always "The War of the Rebellion" in old Ware—made many changes, and currents of thought and fashion were turned. Hoop skirts went out, and bustles came in, and the tiny parasols that the belles carried to Saratoga. A progressive city administration raised a marble fountain at the corner of the Common, to replace the old Town Pump. The city grew, becoming something of a manufacturing centre. Consequently new social bodies were formed; but the old division of the Oligarchy remained untouched, so far as its own feeling was concerned. In the consciousness of the *Cercle* investors' grandchildren, its power still existed. They could understand that they were aging, but not that the changes around them were significant.

Thus one could imagine that on an evening in the late Eighties, Mrs. Callam Heath, following the Ware custom of reading aloud the death notices in the *Evening Messenger*, exclaimed in the old-time language:

"Why, auntie, I see Miss Rebecca Orton is dead! You know, Mr. Loton Longworthy's first wife's cousin—the

family lives in Boston now. The notice is copied from a Boston paper. Her father was a brother of our Mr. Fothergill, and they used to live in that little brown house on Herriott Street, next door to the Clumps'. You remember, of course. Now I think of it, she was a *Cercle* shareholder."

And auntie, herself a *Cercle* shareholder, remembered; and the thought occurred to her:

"We're thinning out."

The same thought occurred casually in the same period to other shareholders. Later, memories retained definitely a reckoning of the survivors. They were forty-six, and then forty-one. The observation, "Why, I believe she was a *Cercle* shareholder," began to have a regular sound. Driving past the *Cercle* Building behind the bays and faithful Washburn, the coachman, whose hair was turning gray, the grandmother of the Coldance twins perhaps remembered a certificate in her attorney's care, and considered pleasantly that while her rheumatism reappeared unfailingly with the approach of a wet spring, it did not seem so severe as formerly. Certainly to indulge in such thoughts was trivial, but one never could tell. An anchor to windward, etc.

The comparative element appeared sharply about 1900. They were going fast, then. The *Messenger* chronicled half a dozen exits within almost as few months, and to avoid estimates of contrasting vigour was impossible. It was noted that Mr. Roman Warrener bent beneath his last attack of lumbago, and that Miss Burton's January fall on the steps of the South Church had broken her strength. She could hardly last long, it seemed.

CHAPTER III

But Miss Burton exhibited astonishing recuperative power. There was a lull in the death-toll. In few countries —Hennion considered — was vitality more obstinate than in New England. Stony land and bitter creeds had bred a grip, and even a waning class long removed from direct contact with the soil could be stubborn. The aged men and women of the *Cercle* hung grimly to their mortal fortresses, and were nursed tenderly by their kin. A few went so far as to develop a *bonhomie*, mildly rallying each other. But that was not the general feeling. Most were too full of valid dignity, too thin-skinned, for even the gentlest raillery. They stood upon their importance as examples of longevity, but strove to ignore the specific connotation.

And their relatives? Hennion often wondered what was the exact attitude of his wife. He knew that she would have lavished her tenderness, her apparently inexhaustible patience, with as generous an abandon if there had been no money involved.

What puzzled him was the extent of her self-deception. She seemed to dwell with her mother in a castle of illusion, wherein had been preserved miraculously the atmosphere of vanished Victorian Ware: the Ware of the Stowe-and-Beecher period, of "ladies" and "gentlemen," the Rebellion, bustles and black silk, Locksley Hall, port wine, and a blissful aloofness from the lower classes. The living corpse absorbed her mind, and she was content only when doing some one of the thousand petty services imposed by her love and duty.

From this twilight of the mind she emerged only when in contact with practical routine—in talk with a tradesman, for example. Then she showed herself an astute bargainer. Her husband could not understand how, possessing so sharp a financial sense, she could delude herself into the peculiar condition which pretended to ignore the existence of the *Cercle*. It was almost inconceivable that a person having such a sense should not relax and, however sincere her love and respect for her mother, relieve the tension by at least the suggestion of a wink. A thirty-thousand-dollar windfall could not in the last analysis mean nothing to her. She knew what it was to pinch, for they had never had much money. Her father, like many of his class and gen-

eration, had died virtually penniless, his genius having been more urgently concerned with spending than with earning.

What a buoyancy had been hers when he first met her! She was all life and laughter, and not even the family poverty, compelling expedients hard for Kinnicutt pride, could dampen her spirit. A blonde Artemis, slightly heavy but with the grace of youth and health and a clear profile, and with the mild sincerity which in a young girl is so often mistaken for spiritual strength, she went to the heart of the solemn young engineer before she knew it.

The gravity of his passion puzzled her at first. It was the custom of the day to write long letters, especially during courtship; but his were voluminous. With writing of which the tiny characters, meticulously formed, flowed oddly from beneath that blunt-fingered hand, he covered sheet after sheet, enlarging upon ideals, literature, engineering experiences in the West, and through it all, upon his reverential love. He told her, carefully, of the event which had made the deepest impression on his life—his parents' tragedy. In the most delicate phrasing and with stilted efforts at which he could smile thirty years later, he tried to suggest the love between the young builder, half a mystic, and the tall girl in whose blood was the lure bred by generations of following the sea. It was a white flame—the millionth case—that neither blurred nor weakened with time, but seemed to gain in luminous intensity. The return of the workman in the evening was a resurrection of the worshipper at the altar, not the usual daily collapse of the sweat-stained male; and through childbirth and amid cooking and sewing, in a two-story wooden house in a treeless Middle Western town, the Well-Beloved held her mystery. . . . There was a gown of odd pattern that she used to wear while awaiting her man's homecoming, a dull blue gown cut squarely and embroidered in silver, giving her the look, with her high, white forehead, and heavy, pale-yellow hair, of a viking's daughter out of a pagan saga. She met her mate unsmiling, and the souls fused when the lips touched.

The son, grave while still a baby, knew early that he was of secondary importance. They brought him up carefully, lovingly, with great patience, but there was always a reserve. They had no passionate affection to give to him, being absorbed in each other. Quarrels were rare in the house. He never saw his parents only in distress until he was grown. One twilight a little before his nineteenth birthday he heard sobs through a door open a few inches, and looking in saw his mother weeping in his father's arms. So close they were, the yellow hair streamed over both, and both were racked by the same grief. It was as though a secret door had been opened behind a tapestry of stately design, revealing a torture-chamber.

This scene he never disclosed to Alice, but he told her of the double suicide a month later, and of his discovery of the bodies. There was no explanation, or need of one. The progress of the woman's cancer had reached such a stage that, realizing the unique beauty of their former happiness, and the horror to come, both had felt that further life would be a profanation.

The boy had then shown the magnificence of a romantic spirit. Without hesitation he bought concealment from the officials, and the bodies were buried unadvertised. It was not hard to accomplish in that raw, boardwalk town. He left the place without money, but with the satisfaction of having saved from stares and jibing the termination of the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

Alice thought the suicide horrible, and its suppression fantastic if not immoral. His recital of it came near making a break between them. He might have let the break come if his vision had not been dimmed by the illusion of desire. When he thought in middle age of his frantic anxiety, half-ashamed regret mingled with mild amusement. What would have been the result if he had failed to urge his love? He would have

arrived at Russia, or some Eastern mountain-country, perhaps, instead of remaining quietly at Ware. Certainly he would not have refused that Chinese offer, made on the strength of his early work in the Dakotas. The rank and perquisites of a mandarin! They had offered him those, to build a railroad in China, the cradle of history, the dwelling-place and tomb of mysterious yellow millions, home of the Oriental wisdom that had forgotten more than the West ever knew.

The adventure drew him like a magnet; but Malcolm was a baby of six months, and Alice had set the full force of her resistance against his going. What was she to do without her great, strong John? She could not imagine why he wished to go to China, of all places, where there was so much dirt, and the people were repulsive and treacherous. He might as well have wanted to go to Africa, and be mangled by a lion, like brave Dr. Livingstone. Not even she could quite picture her John as a missionary to the heathen, but to her mind most foreign countries except the European were much alike. She detested Chinamen, negroes, and the Turks, concerning whose atrocities upon the virtuous Armenians such ghastly tales were beginning to be told. The Japanese were exceptions. She had once sat at table with a pair of them, and they were so little, and pronounced the word "potato" so quaintly.

Ah, well, he knew something about her mental processes by then. To leave her would have been really cruel, and he was still optimistic about the Ware situation. Faithful work, he believed, would bring its reward. He worked hard, and also tried faithfully to meet social calls.

In the set of which the Kinnicutts, whatever their financial condition, were charter members, he was of course an obvious alien; but he thought that patience would bring acceptance. Rhett, the history man, who had married an Aydelotte, was a farmer's son. Rhett, however, had good looks, and brilliance, and a wit that was death to snubs; and even Rhett was not so completely accepted as he had thought.

Curious, how the grim old families, stubborn in their decline, hung together! His mother-in-law, proud as a female Lucifer, had never quite forgiven him for marrying her daughter. At the wedding she organized a rescue party in case the honeymoon should begin badly, and for years she could never think of him as other than a savage.

Once, rising early by accident, she saw him in the little garden behind the house, tending the Jacqueminots before the sun grew hot. She hailed him dictatorially, and when he approached exclaimed with surprise:

"Oh, it's *you*, is it? I thought it was a nigger"—the inference being that none save a humble hireling of colour would naturally be about such business in the early hours.

He loved any garden, but had always disliked the Standish Street House. It was like a mausoleum, inciting the unwary mind to thoughts of death. The exterior was dignified but forbidding. The doorway seemed designed to emit a coffin and its supporting black-gloved crew; one expected to meet them when mounting the high granite steps. The hall was dark, and decorated with steel engravings spotted in the corners. In one General Washington presented an impassive front; in the other, General Grant. The titles (in script) might have been exchanged without damage to the reputation of either officer. A third engraving depicted some terrible catastrophe of biblical days, in which humanity was as definitely deprived of hope as any Puritan could wish.

And yet the old barrack had its appealing side. It suggested the aged relative-in-law with whom he had been saddled for half his life, whom he could not put away, but for some of whose qualities he could not help feeling a half-amused admiration.

He would have sold it a thousand times, Malcolm frankly loathed it, and Sheila liked it only for her mother's sake; but to Madame Lucretia and to Alice herself it was the home, the castle,

the symbol and cabinet of the Kinnicutt greatness. It fairly gobbled money in interest, taxes, and repairs. There was never a time when it would not have been a better house if it had been different.

But bad though it was, it was a roof-tree, and a characteristic one. Proudly aristocratic, it stood gloomily adjacent to, and overlooking, the crucial corner of Whitemarsh Avenue—*the* Avenue—that fortalice of the old Oligarchy, of which every dwelling, every elm and maple, had a history of significance in Ware. It had a definite personality which epitomized its ownership, and like the last authentic representative, and the social order of which she was a member, it carried a share of pathos to its imminent metamorphosis.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH the plate-glass window—closed in spite of sultry weather—Hennion could see a little way up the Avenue the house of his friend Horace Ude, or more accurately, of Horace Ude's father; and there was transpiring the event bearing on the *Cercle*, of which Malcolm was ignorant, and which would have moved him, had he known of it, to sardonic entertainment.

The event was Elias Ude's last illness; for with dramatic patness destiny had laid low at the same time two of the eight *Cercle* survivors. Elias had more mind than Madame Kinnicutt and, unreconciled to his departure, saw death looming over him with the spirit of a savage combatant who had often taken life by the throat. His struggles wore him out; but when his son remonstrated, he gave vent to a typical assertion:

"By God, I'll stick it out to beat Lucretia Kinnicutt, the old parasite!"

Horace did not repeat the speech, but the nurse did; and Hennion, with his closest approach to the kind of amusement that his son would have felt, visualized the buccaneer rallying the last vestige of energy in his shattered mechanism for a final consciousness of villainy. A *Cercle* share of twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars was of little importance to his estate—he was at least four times a millionaire—whereas to Alice Hennion it meant a fortune; but having seldom failed in the course of a long life to do an injury when the chance offered, he was determined not to lose his individuality at the end. He hated all backsliders, weaklings, snivellers; sneered at chastity, except in his own women; assaulted religion with a raucous whoop; would have burned monasteries and set his troopers to pricking the monks down-hill with spear-points if he had been a mediæval captain. In every way except in pride he had insulted his caste. When he was fifteen he ran away to sea, fought for a foothold in the West Indian rum-and-molasses trade, and returned at thirty-four with a wooden leg and a working capital. He put his money into tenements and lots, sold them and bought others, married at forty a colourless girl whom he treated abominably, and rebuilt the Ude mansion on the Avenue when his uncle died. He was a scandalous rascal; but he was a Ude, he carried himself, wooden leg and all, with a fierce pride, and in the essentials of domineering temper and tremendous egotism, he was unmistakably of the Elect. The Avenue accepted him, with reservations. Children were told:

"That's Mr. Elias Ude, dear. He's a very wealthy man, but a little peculiar. Perhaps it would be just as well if you didn't go too close to him. He isn't very fond of little children."

His own child, everyone knew, was irony personified. In place of the lusty, squalling brat that could logically have answered with enthusiasm to a buccaneerish paternity, the unhappy Mrs. Ude produced a stunted, puling infant, and promptly died from chagrin.

The boy shrank from his father from the first. Before he could talk, it became evident that he abhorred Elias's deep-sea booming. When he was five, the approach of the loud, limping footfalls would send him to the edge of a spasm. At ten he liked books and pictures, and quiet games in which the

clothing was not rumpled. To prim little girls in white starched frocks he would show his collection of postage stamps, and the solemn children, gazing under an afternoon light from high windows at stamps from Persia, made living pastels which would have been enjoyed by a French painter of the group that was dangerously modern when in England Sir Frederic Leighton was at his palmiest.

Later, Horace avoided girls. They made him self-conscious. His father had told him a thousand times that he was a fool, and he began to believe it. Fortunately he escaped to a boarding-school, and after a long struggle achieved his perspective; but he never forgot or quite recovered from Elias's early browbeating. Realizing ultimately the bitter disappointment caused by his personality, he tried to accept his father's contempt without malice. He would have been, in mediæval times, one of the monks dispossessed and pursued by the captain's troopers.

His matured taste in art was excellent, and he bought beautiful and valid things: porcelains of worth, and well-chosen American landscapes.

Like the rest of his character, however, it was slightly warped by a commercial twist. As he grew older, his love of money passed from caution to the edge of miserliness. Even the grim Elias was compelled to respect his genius for protecting five and one-half per cent. Gradually, in proportion as age and passion made a craggy ruin of the veteran of rum-and-molasses warfare, the care of the estate was turned over to him, and moving quietly, like some small gray animal, he guarded and increased the capital with an effect as ruthless as that obtained by any of his father's explosions. The brokers said that he was harder to deceive than his father.

If he was deceived at all, his friend believed it was by the lady whom he had married, the daughter of an impoverished New Hampshire family, met at a Massachusetts shore resort of dignity. She had a pallid grace, and beautiful wrists and ankles, and was clever enough exactly to appraise her assets. Always in white or black, with violets at her modest girdle, she innocently exposed the wrists, and allowed the merest suggestion of the ankles to appear.

She was wise—old as the world, not grasping, but persistent. She fascinated little Horace, who moved slowly around her like a wary perch around delicate bait in a quiet nook, with eyes very like a perch's. Having hooked him, she suppressed the ankles completely, but continued to wave the wrists, which came to have a hypnotic connotation, like the arm clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, in the Tennysonian poem then fashionable. At Ware's exclusive tea-tables one could not escape them. Always they were emerging whitely into the foreground from black three-quarter-length sleeves, while from the fair fingers that held daintily a fragile cup, flamed with a solid radiance the deep diamonds of the netted Horace.

She made him almost too clever a wife. She bore him three children, all pale, all with eyes a little like a perch's, and never committed the error of neglecting him for them. His house was beautifully run, his wishes were respected before they had been expressed. She rose to the ultimate degree of tact by so managing the titular commander, Elias, that he did not know he was being managed, and thundered forth his incipiently senile commands without a suspicion that they were often intercepted between quarter-deck and fo'c'stle. She was the only human being to whom he had been known to apologize for his vocabulary.

She had but one bad blemish, technically, as spouse and chatelaine, and for that one she was not strictly responsible, since it did not in its true character exist at the time of marriage. For how could she, or anyone not a prophet, have foretold that her adolescent brother, Paul Wrightstone, would develop not only the eccentricities of genius, but to an uncertain extent the genius itself, a madness even more embarrassing?

A silent youth, apparently harmless

save for a mild poetic tendency, Paul grew up near Concord without making any special trouble or deviating widely from the accepted path. It was a bomb when he announced that his relatives and surroundings bored him hopelessly, and departed for the Metropolis so casually that the family failed to grasp the finality of his action. He did not return to the nest except semi-occasionally when he was drunk and, as he would afterward explain calmly, irresponsible. He had, however, a knack of getting involved in difficulties out of which it became necessary to bail him—personal escapades, and political forerunnings of bolshevistic disorders.

In the absence of Wrightstone males, Horace Ude found himself elected to perform this function. Many phases of bohemian existence were revealed to him in the course of a decade's rescue trips, and an especially disagreeable side of the matter was his own feeling of pollution, while the astounding Paul, eternal child, emerged brightly as a faun from each disgrace that should have overwhelmed him.

At last they got rid of him, and heard no more until as "Scaramond" he made his brief flight across the artistic sky—though at the time "artistic" was an adjective held in dispute as applying to the wild negroid laughter of "Voodoo Echoes," and the orange splendour of "The Haytian Imperial Salute."

A friend sent them a review of the poet's work, but it was Choctaw to them. Horace was competent in established art, but an advance prophet of the syncopated rhythm that was to express musically the nervous decadence of a new century was beyond him.

The only clear thing at first was that the wretched Paul had become notorious in a new way. Then the notoriety was complicated by success. His doggerel had a peculiar catchy quality, hateful yet resistless. It was scored and played as a test in a burlesque house, caught up, whistled on the street. People in Ware began to ask questions. The opinion was voiced by George Peacock, perpetual *enfant terrible* of the University English department, that the stuff really had literary quality. A philologist became interested in Paul's use of certain forms of obscure negro dialect. The culmination was an invitation to give a reading under the auspices of the English Department, with comments on theory and method.

The Udes had to entertain him. He appeared sedately in ultra-conventional costume, and gave the reading. The theory, he blandly informed Horace, he had invented for Ware's special benefit on the way from New York. Upon the source of his knowledge of obscure Haytian dialect—an ancient negro waiter born in Owosso, Alabama—he did not think it necessary to enlarge. His behaviour was almost immodestly exemplary; he basked and purred, while his hypnotized sister and brother-in-law, observing the play of the curved lines in his lean face of a thirty-six-year-old Pan, expected him at any instant to leap to the top of a bookcase, or pull the white whiskers of the Dean.

He did nothing of the sort, and sighs of relief were freed. His sister, with the perennial hopefulness of her kind, began to see upon the horizon a protracted conventionalization. Whatever the possibilities along that line, the poet fulfilled expectations, in his own way and time, as the result of meeting and responding to the charm of Sheila Hennion.

Little Sheila—a baby to her father—was seventeen, graceful as wreaths of mist over a meadow, elusive as the dream of a dream. In her gentian eyes dwelt together innocence and sophistication in the modern fashion, and her slim body had the fragrance of inimitable Youth. She was the Spirit of the Twentieth Century; but also she was foam on moonlit water, the tender foliage of a birch sapling on the slope of a steep hill, the perfume of all the flowers in Lost Valley.

Scaramond called her the Lilac Lass, and somewhere from his box, beneath the shopworn tricks, produced the power to fascinate her, as lightly as a shepherd piping in a pastoral. None

but the uncanny creature that he was could have done it, making music from discords, a shining castle out of odds and ends collected through the battering years.

He was as careful, as exact in his spinning as a magician, and the gossips of Ware could neither bring him definitely to book, nor, being less clean than he could make himself, believe that he was working harmlessly. When at last his brother-in-law, never eloquent, took him to task, he skipped verbally like a goat on a mountain-side, in words which Horace reported to Hennion dryly.

"Visions and dreams, brother-in-law," the poet had said, "visions and dreams! Shall a girl live by bread alone? I will make of this thing a bracelet of fairy jewels—diamonds and emeralds, and strange semi-precious stones—for her to wear all her life and never be tired. She shall be able to say what few American girls—no, not one in ten million—can say, I mean, that she was loved by a poet, not altogether by brokers. I have given her what the brokers cannot give, and I shall stop when the time arrives."

"Rubbish!" said Horace. "You'll make the child unhappy."

"Happiness," Scaramond replied, "is not rubbish, and is relative. Some get it from fishcakes, some from chequebooks, and some from windmills. This is a totally different matter, and one about which I am better fitted to do the judging than you."

"Her father can do the necessary judging," Horace said, and went forthwith to present the case to Hennion.

CHAPTER V

THE visit had marked the beginning of real friendship between the two. The dignity with which one brought forward and the other received the embarrassing subject of the poet was pleasing to both, and gave the keynote to their intercourse. Hennion promised to suggest to his wife that Sheila be sent away on a visit, and Ude intimated that pressure might be brought to bear on the poet by means of an allowance.

Each recognized in his unhumorous fashion the element of absurdity in the situation and in their manœuvres to meet it, but neither was moved to indicate his recognition by more than a flicker of light in the eye.

It was this suggestion of a wink—this faint tempering of proper restraint—that completed the establishment of the mental understanding on a satisfactory basis. Both appreciated it the more because they missed it in their wives, in Hennion's case on account of Alice's limitations, in Ude's by reason of Mrs. Ude's superior cleverness, which made him distrust her slightly.

Their alliance, in which each respected scrupulously the other's individuality, gave them a mutual sense of efficiency. Characteristically, they were not much disturbed by an unexpected settlement of the matter in hand.

There appeared as if by a Greek miracle one morning, an Amazon nearly six feet tall, in a bonnet lined with mauve, who laid hold upon the poet and bore him off in a cab. Her invasion threw him into a kind of fatalistic catalepsy, and in explanation he said only:

"C'est Ernestine," as one might observe, with a slow wave of the hand, "It is Nemesis."

To the two men, familiar with conjugal phenomena, he was more human in his departure than ever before. Under the scathing eye of the huge female his peacock's tail folded and fell ignominiously. Evidently Ernestine knew his intimate prosaic necessities: the state of his digestive tract, and the date when he must change the weight of his underwear or catch cold. His peacockings were mere embroidery; she viewed him as a man neither more nor less eccentric than most, to be managed, exploited and petted. He might permissibly amuse himself for a week or two, but a serious deviation was out of the question. Her attitude made it clear that she did not approve of Ware as a moral influence. The bread-winner must return to the business of life.

Hennion and Ude exchanged the glances of husbands, and a few congratulatory words. The former took a soothing turn among his landscapes, preparatory to screwing up the rents in tenements on East Street. The latter decided, after some thought, that it might be well to point a moral gently to his daughter, though he was averse from that form of parental self-indulgence as a habit.

The chance came while his wife was busy with her endless care of her mother, and Sheila, in pale blue with stockings and new slippers to match, awaited the call of an escort. She went out a great deal—too often and too carelessly, it seemed vaguely to her father. He was surprised that Alice allowed it, but so far as he could discover, Alice herself was in doubt. There were long consultations about it on the third floor in the Victorian language. Madame Lucretia, still capable at that time of the forms of argument, protested; but apparently there was no objection to radical discipline. Customs really were changing. Girls were going out more freely. Sheila must be given the advantages that her friends had. It was hard to decide where to draw the line.

The girl sat quietly, glancing now and then without nervousness at the clock, and slowly working smooth, with the universal motions, the fingers of her long gloves. She was very dainty, unusually well-poised. Hennion had increasing difficulty, on such occasions, in realizing that she was his daughter. Here was a personality that he had seen develop day by day, had helped to form; and yet suddenly it was something individual, without relation to him, and he did not know it at all.

What on earth did she think about, and why? And why was she beautiful, instead of ugly? He might easily have had an ugly daughter, he supposed; Gayley had one with a birth-mark. What would he have done if Sheila had looked like Etta Gayley? Advised her to study for a Ph.D., no doubt. Fortunately, he did not have that sort of thing to worry about; the child was perfect.

"My dear," he said briskly, "did it occur to you at all that you were a little unwise in seeing quite so much of Wrightstone?"

"Why, father! Poor old Paul! What harm could it do to see him?"

"Well . . . it would have made a good deal of talk if it had gone on any longer."

"Everything makes talk now, father. It would make talk if a girl didn't do anything."

"But you aren't in a very pleasant position now, are you?"

She stared at him, then laughed with a clear trill.

"Why? Do you mean, about Ernestine? I've always known about her. He told me the second time he ever talked to me. He said she'd come sooner or later—she always does. So I wasn't surprised."

He marvelled.

"Have you any idea—" he began.

Sheila sprang up, and came to poise on the arm of his chair, touching him with the lightest of caresses, bringing to his middle age Youth's magical atmosphere.

"Dearest father, I know quite all that's necessary to know about her, and about Paul. There are lots of different kinds of men: men a girl likes, and men she dances with, and the man she marries. She doesn't get them mixed up if she is clever, do you see? And she has to be clever, to get on at all. So you needn't have worried about Paul. He isn't the kind of man a girl marries."

He did not know what to say, and she stood up, straightening her dress.

"Life's a funny thing, isn't it?" she said after a moment. "Why is it that people who are good seem to be always looking for bad things, and people who have been bad try to find the good ones? You and everyone else thought that Paul was trying to hurt me, and all the while he was just being good to me! All he wants is to be good, and people won't let him; they always expect him to be bad, because he has been bad, like a

little boy in a mud puddle. That's all he is, just an old little boy. You'd like him if you knew him."

The doorbell rang, and in a moment or two she was off, to a chorus of gay calls and laughter, leaving him with the feeling of helplessness that he had often had in dealing with Malcolm. He was not conscious of age, yet the younger generation outstripped him. What precocity! He could not measure its gambols from innocence to cynicism and back again. There were no reserves or definite rules of conduct except those of expediency. It was life with the background left out. What would remain for these boys and girls when they were fifty? They could not all die young.

Many times in the course of the two years following that scene, he had had occasion to wonder if Sheila was in love with Scaramond. She heard from him, saw him sometimes; so much he knew.

But she had a hundred admirers and several serious suitors, of whom two, a lawyer and a broker, were in the lead. He thought that the broker stood the best chance. He was in a better position to marry than the lawyer, and Alice was definitely on his side. Hennion disliked him—a pushing fellow, he thought, with the hide of a rhinoceros—but he was determined not to betray himself. His interference would accomplish nothing, and the thing that mattered was Sheila's happiness.

Yes, that was what mattered. He and Alice were middle-aged, the ancient remnant in the chamber above was gasping out her last sighs; Malcolm was launched for good or evil—they could do nothing more for him. Only the beautiful girl, who by some strange whim of inexorable destiny had come into being through their agency, was of consequence now. Let all eight of the remaining *Cercle* organisms cease to function at the same time, if they liked. Old people were of no moment, their day was past, and the middle-aged thought too much about money. This one girl, so fair, so precocious, so dangerously alive, was worth more than all the gray heads and bent brows in the world. A savage anger rose in him against his wife, for her preoccupation with the dust of the grave. . . . He controlled it.

CHAPTER VI

In the street below, a taxi drew up and the young broker, Walmsford, sprang out with a suitor's activity, and assisted Sheila, who had in her arms a great cluster of May lilacs. His manner seemed proprietary. He posed and gyrated, but Sheila wasted no time on the sidewalk. She ran like a lilac streamer up the steps, and her father heard her pass back through the house on a search for a place to put the flowers.

He went into the hall, and down the narrow stairs. The couple were in the dining-room, laughing and squabbling in voices that rose and fell as the owners remembered or forgot the sickness in the house. The front door, left ajar, had drifted open. He stepped out on the porch.

The maples were in full leaf, but they were so tall—and the elms beyond them even taller—that his view of Standish Street and Whitemarsh Avenue was clear. He knew every detail of the neighbourhood, could have built up a history of each family. Miss Sarah Fothergill, across the street, opened her front door, as she did every evening at twilight, and looked too early for the boy who delivered the *Messenger*. She was an old maid, with curls. Her father and mother were dead, but Hennion remembered exactly how they had looked for twenty years, and the brand of whisky old George Fothergill drank, and how red his neck was, like a turkey cock's wattles. In the house there was a gold dinner service, given to a diplomatic ancestor by an emperor. Miss Sarah's yellow cat stepped deliberately out beside her, affectionately rubbing the black stuff of her dress against her lean calves, and he remembered a succession of yellow cats, all rubbing against Fothergill dresses or trousers.

There must have been hundreds of them, perhaps thousands, counting those drowned in infancy. It was astonishing how many Fothergills and yellow cats could live and die, or move away, in a couple of decades.

Some of the houses on the Avenue had changed ownership. Sam Soates, the hardware magnate, had bought the old Longworthy mansion and converted it into a species of near-ducal palace. It was a bitter day for the Oligarchy when he first tooled his dashing four-*in*-hand up the sacred way and descended to possession of the premises held so long by Loton J. Longworthy, a guardian pillar of the Avenue's gate. Once a year Judge Longworthy, with his contemporary, William Henry Harrison St. James, had stretched a chain from curb to curb, and let it stay an hour, to prove the way a private one, no vulgar city thoroughfare. Now there were no Longworthys left in Ware, and the St. James place was in use by a finishing school for girls.

The time was not far off when the last remnants of the old régime would be engulfed in the neurotic modern advance, and the Avenue flooded by persons of whose names no Longworthy had heard the sound. There would be pawnbrokers and soap manufacturers on every corner. The last survivors of the Oligarchy would gradually be driven to a refuge colony which was being formed in a quiet district far out on Noble Road, beyond the taint of commerce. . . . With active pleasure springing from his mood he pictured his own house, the Ark of the Kinnicutts, sold and perhaps converted into a students' boarding-house. They would pierce the walls for extra windows, and raze or shift partitions, and redecorate. There was vindictiveness in the thought; the house had been a zealous tyrant.

He had still a half-hour before the seven o'clock New England supper. He went back into the hall and took his last year's straw from the black-walnut hat rack between Generals Washington and Grant. Passing down the steps, he made a mental note, mechanically, to have the ivy trimmed back; it had climbed the iron railing and was beginning to flow over the granite treads. The air was warm—too warm for May There would be a thunderstorm.

He turned the corner of the Avenue, saluting the two Warrener "girls," sixty-year-old nieces of the tottering *Cercle* survivor. They peered at him with a shrouded curiosity, but he made no sign except the bow.

The word "Ghouls!" shot into his mind. Were they haunting the neighbourhood of death like ill-omened birds? They looked not unlike ravens, with their uncanny beady eyes and black dresses falling straight as plumage to within an inch or two of abnormally narrow feet. They were celebrants of an enforced chastity, dreary virgins whom no man had desired to approach. Existing in a half-light, sustained by tea, black walnut and gentility, they had culled little from life, poor souls, save a thin greed. What benefit would the money bring them if it came? They could have more tea, and elaborate funerals. A story existed about a previous Warrener funeral—some tale of a rebellious corpse. . . . No matter.

As he neared the white façade of the Ude house, he saw Horace standing on the porch, debating with himself the probability of the shower, and no doubt as much concerned about damage to a few porch cushions, if it rained, as though he had not had four millions and a dying father.

"You know, I don't very much care whether it does or not," he said surprisingly when they met.

"Does what? Rains?"

"Yes. Will you come in? No? Well, let's walk a little way up the Avenue. That magnolia over there is wonderful, isn't it? I wish I had one like it, but you can't buy them, you have to grow them, like an English lawn. . . . Does the spring seem to you to be extraordinarily beautiful this year?"

Hennion stared at him covertly. He had on a new suit of gray clothes, and carried a stick—was almost rakish.

"I don't know. I don't suppose I'm

feeling very pristine. The old lady, you know. How's your father?"

"The same. Very bad." Horace did not notice the bluntness of the question. "I doubt if he lasts more than twenty-four hours. He's conscious, but Munn says any little shock. . . . Hennion, have you ever felt like letting go? —I know you have—cutting out this sort of thing, I mean, and really living. We're only half alive, you and I."

"That's true enough. But I'm fifty-six years old."

Ude swung his stick recklessly.

"I'm fifty-three, but I don't feel old. I feel as though I had missed something. You know, I never did have what they call a young man's fling. My father frightened all the spirit out of me. Perhaps that's it. Or is it just human nature? To-day, absurd as it may seem, I could almost sympathize with that fellow Wrightstone, that coon-song shouter. He gets some joy out of life, anyway."

So little Horace had it too, the regret for China lost, the urge to spread the arms and embrace adventure. Suppressed and miserly, and fifty-three years old, he wanted to sail a ship—search for Spanish treasure, cock a wicked trigger, rescue at the rapier's point some frail fair one from the pirate's grasp. It was ridiculous, like an old horse prancing, but it was valid. The romantic impulse never died.

"What are you going to do?" Hennion asked curiously.

"Do? Nothing! Go back and figure rents, and wait for my father to die. I can't do anything, of course. I'm committed to a system, just as you are. I shall live on, just as I am living, to my appointed end, and die like Elias—only less noisily, I hope."

It was a more intimate conversation, probably, than Ude had ever held with anyone before. He was a man who loved caution, concealment, the stealthy approach. To no one but his friend would he have divulged the other side of his character in definite words, and not to him if he had not guessed the existence in him of a similar feeling. Chance—the spring, the magnolia—had opened a door. He closed it quickly.

"I had a small amount of money in Russian loans," he said. "I have been getting it out. No man's money will be safe over there in a few months."

They walked to the head of the Avenue, discussing the European war-cloud of the period. When they turned back they saw coming toward them on the half-run a woman's figure with crossed apron-strings.

"Why, that's Margaret!" Hennion exclaimed. "The old lady must be worse."

They walked quickly, and Alice's Irish maid met them.

"Ye're wanted at home, Misther Hinnion. Th' docthor sez she's very bad."

CHAPTER VII

Breath still came and went in the body. The nurse and Hennion remained in the death chamber, and the doctor came twice.

Alice, completely shattered by vigils, was carried rather than persuaded to her bed, where she lay under Sheila's care until an injection took effect.

Dim lights burned through the house. Flitting between rooms on the first and second floors were several ghostly cousins of the Kinnicutt blood, not only inured to death, but deriving from it a melancholy satisfaction.

The Irish maid Margaret, rocking to and fro in a corner with her apron over her head, was with difficulty restrained from keening before the time was ripe. Malcolm had not been summoned; he could have done nothing, and had a frank pagan hate for dissolution.

Hennion sat in an alcove with his thoughts. There was nothing to await except the cessation of the senseless sounds from the great shadowy bed. Each breath was so amazingly long drawn out that there seemed no possibility of another; and the resumption of the effort, after a breathless pause, produced a shock. The fascinated cousins padded softly to the closed door at intervals. They could be heard

whispering and scurrying away, like rats behind a wainscot.

The only fascination for the watcher was in wonder that a mere physical formality, a phenomenon of lungs labouring without volition, could affect so many persons. The nurse moved like all the nurses in the world, tending her charge. Munn, the doctor, was professional in manner on the first visit, humanly weary on the second.

"She's about gone," he said, yawning. "Miss Scads knows what to do."

He was right in both assertions.

At the mysterious hour following dawn, when there was no sound from the world outside, and footfalls within the house had ceased, the last struggle took place and the grotesque breathing stopped. There was a void—nothingness.

"What time is it?" Hennion asked heavily.

The nurse told him efficiently that it was four forty-seven, and leaned over the body.

He went to the library and smoked half of a cigar, which had no taste.

Returning, he met Miss Scads in the hall. Her hand was on the doorknob; she had just left the death chamber. She halted.

"Don't you want to look at Madam Kinnicutt?" she asked, with an explosion of strong white teeth in a bright smile. "She looks very peaceful."

"Good God, no!" he said, more loudly than he intended. "I've looked at her enough. *Requiescat in pace.* I hope I shan't have to die like that."

His thought was that he would prefer to die violently, like his parents, no matter how lancinating the shock, rather than drag out a slow end; but the scandalized Miss Scads, not knowing his reaction, thought him merely brutal.

Realizing that he was faint from want of food, he started downstairs, to forage for crackers in the dining-room pantry. He dreaded an encounter with a wandering cousin or family friend, or with the emotional Maggie, but there was no one. Exhaustion had laid them low, and the climax, a mere cessation, had come so quietly that even the professional mourners were caught unawares. To awaken Alice would have been pointless; he had told Miss Scads to let her sleep while she could.

He fumbled in the dimness below, upset a sauce-dish, found the crackers. The crackers raised his spirits. They were soggy, but they sustained. He poured out a glassful of water that had once been iced, and discovered three pickles and a piece of hard cheese. A section of stale cake made almost a meal.

As he stood munching appreciatively a draught from the lower hall struck him. The front door—it was the second time he had found it left open. Munn's carelessness this time, probably.

He moved along the hall, still munching, then stopped stock-still.

There were voices in the vestibule, very low, a man's and a woman's. The woman's voice was Sheila's, but when had he heard that note before?

His memory groped, and then flashed back to the scene more than thirty years before, when he had surprised his father and mother in their sorrow. His mother's voice had been like that. Or was his imagination playing him tricks, in the excitement? He had thought of his mother and father only a little while before, in connection with death. . . .

The voice ran on, on the low, sobbing note, and the man's voice countered. They were saying good-bye. He heard the name "Paul." Sheila repeated it twice, and with an odd sense of regret—mingled with shame for the egotism of the feeling—he realized that his own name had never been spoken by a woman in that way. His daughter was saying good-bye—not good-night—to the man she loved. She was twenty and he was fifty-six, and there had never been anything in his life so vivid as the colour, for her lover, in her voice.

She came into the hall, and closed the door.

He stood looking at her, holding in his hand the small remainder of the stale cake. She had been crying, but she was not startled or embarrassed.

"Your grandmother has been dead an hour," he said stupidly.

"I'm glad it's over. Does mother know?"

"Not yet. She's asleep still."

"I'll tell her when she wakes up." She approached and stood close, without touching him. "Father, I'm going to marry Charley Walmsford. I like him, and we shall get on all right, and not get into any messes, or be queer, like Malcolm. That man who was with me just now was Paul Wrightstone. I couldn't leave the house, and I had to see him before he went away—he's going this morning. I telephoned to him."

Hennion brushed these details aside with a gesture of which he was unconscious. She seemed to him the loveliest thing in the world, this girl who happened to be his daughter, and he did not know how to help her.

"Wouldn't it be possible—couldn't you marry him?" he asked, feeling his own clumsiness.

"Paul? Not possible, dear. He couldn't desert Ernestine entirely, and there's a wife in Omaha who won't divorce him. And he isn't quite big enough to make it worth while to run away with him and make everybody else unhappy and perhaps him and me too. He isn't really a genius, you know—he's just Paul, just a dear old playboy. And you and mother have had enough to bear, and I—well, I like money and clothes, and—and a certain amount of respectability, I suppose. It couldn't be done. Paul knows."

This seemed to him to be quicksand.

"And are you quite fair to Walmsford?"

She met his look fairly, but with the cynicism of the younger generation.

"Charley and I understand each other. Don't worry, father, it will be all right. Only I can't see Paul any more." She caught her breath in a sob, like a little girl. "He's a weak brother, but you don't know how good he's been to me!"

The younger generation was definitely beyond him. It had the passion, but had it the endurance? The current of its passion changed from depths to shallows too rapidly, running strongly in the channel, but never getting far away from cynical shoals. Sheila was right; it would be madness for her to make a pact with the poet. But he knew that his mother, if she had loved a man like Wrightstone enough to use that voice in speaking to him, would have followed him into darkness if she could not bring him up to the light. True, his mother would not have loved a Wrightstone, but if she had—

The argument was profitless. He was a sentimental anachronism, fortunate in having a daughter who had common sense.

"Your mother knows of your engagement?" he asked.

"Oh, surely. You know Charley makes as much of a hit with her as he does with me."

He turned away, wincing a little.

Apparently he was the only member with whom the ubiquitous Charley had not made a hit. Possibly his turn would come. He visualized his future efforts to get on smoothly with the thick-skinned young man, whose every act, so far, had gone against the grain. He was more determined than ever to have no ill-feeling, let patience cost him what it might.

The day had broken clearly, the sun was up, and from regions above, the tread of Maggie, hushed but ponderous, could be heard descending cautiously. Her brogue asked a question of Miss Scads, whose efficiency must have brought her to the danger-spot. A Celtic wail was threatened, then stifled a-borning. The tread came on, accompanied by a pious mutter. Soon the cousins would be at attention, the news would spread, and the house be decked with the trappings and paraphernalia of grief, physical and spiritual.

He opened the front door again, and stood in the pale, early sunlight, drawing in the fresh air of the morning. Doctor Munn, haggard despite a resurrection of the professional manner, swung up in his roadster and mounted the steps.

"Has she gone?"

Hennion nodded, and the other, dropping again the medical mask, leaned

against a post and looked at him with insolent curiosity.

"What time?" he asked.

"Four forty-seven by the nurse's watch. Why?"

"Old man Ude stopped at five-fourteen, that's all. I thought you might be interested, as a friend of Horace's. I'll drop in later. Good-bye."

So Elias had kept his word. The news did not bulk very large to Hennion, for he had never expected his mother-in-law to win, and in his shock at the detail of her death, and his preoccupation of the last hour with Sheila's affair, the *Cercle* had been forgotten. But it was wildly ironical that she should have failed to cop—as Malcolm would have had it—by scarcely more than a quarter of an hour. He thought that the feminine mind, unused to philosophical acceptance of the miss-and-mile doctrine, would take the loss unkindly.

He was wrong. However desirous Alice had been, in her secret way, of the relief that the inheritance would have given, she was too much overcome by the loss of her mother and her own prostration to worry much about it immediately; and after the funeral—which she passed through in a kind of trance—she fell easily into an attitude of resignation.

"You'll have to take care of mother now, dearie," she told Sheila. "She's an old woman now, slipping down the hill of life. I suppose we may as well sell the dear old home, for there'll be nobody to use it when you're married, and your father and I can move into a flat—though I always said I'd never live in one. But I shall want to see a great deal of you—you're all I have left, you know, with Malcolm gone."

It seemed to Hennion, listening to her prattle, that to attempt to consider a woman as an individual, apart from her family, was futile. She was not an individual; she was a link in an endless chain of mothers and daughters, each of whom depended on the one before and the one behind, and was depended on by them. Mother and daughter exhausted and supported each other, and when one passed beyond the turn of the wheel, the strain fell on the next in line. She whose mother had burdened her, frequently became a burden on her own daughter. Together they formed a barrier, which men could not break through or even understand. In the ultimate test they had held together like a solid cable, from the days of the Mysteries. They formed a universal mystery, not to be solved. . . . Between Alice and Sheila, the Tree and the Fruit, he was as nothing, an atom carried by a gust. They were the rulers, the banded women.

But again his thought was wrong, or incomplete. For with an indescribable gesture of trust, and with the placid confidence of years shining mildly in her blue eyes, which seemed to have faded several shades, his wife laid her hand affectionately on his, and said to Sheila:

"We are just two old people now, your father and I—just two old people going down the hill together. We must be good to each other."

She needed him; he was after all the head of the family. He began unconsciously to preen. And when Alice patted his hand gently again, he detected no sarcasm—and indeed none was intended—in her comfortable words:

"Good old John!"

HIS HONEYMOON*

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

"YOU do love me, don't you? Love me much as ever?"

"Of course I do."

Duane Blair tried to make his answer as hearty and sentimental as possible, as enthusiastic and sincere, even, as his answer to the same question had been three weeks before.

He was afraid that it sounded just a trifle inadequate. He put his arm around the pleasant, slender shoulder of his wife and kissed the full, prettily rouged lips that were held up to him.

"Of course I love you as much as ever," he added, the necessary ardour helped out, just a trifle, with patience.

But even as he said the words Duane knew that he wasn't telling the truth. What a man he was! He despised himself for it, though that didn't seem to help. Here he was married, actually married to Lavinia, and he felt just mildly pleased over it, the pleasure mixed only too thoroughly with a feeling of impatience and the least trifle of boredom.

Six months ago, one month ago, even, being married to Lavinia was the thing he had wanted most of all. And here he was, married just three weeks and tired of matrimony and Lavinia already.

Tired? No, that wasn't it, either. It wasn't as definite as that. It was just a faint cloud of not being as rapturously, as unreally happy as he thought he would be, as he felt he ought to be, as he had been, the first day or two of marriage.

What a man he was! He didn't love Lavinia and she had given up everything for him; her home, her parents, everything. Everything, that is, in a way.

They were going to live in New York when the honeymoon was over and of course then she could see her parents every day, and her friends too, and have more money than she had had before marriage, and her own home. So she really wasn't exactly giving things up. But she thought she was—said so, anyhow. And she'd come 'way out here to California with him for a honeymoon—California had been Lavinia's idea—and here he was, a bit tired of things. Not of her, of course. And he'd never let her find out. Why, it would just break the heart of a sensitive, delicate little thing like Lavinia if she thought that he didn't love her any more. Lavinia had had a lot of chances to marry, dozens of them, she'd told him about them from the time he had first met her, and she had given up all of her other admirers for him. And now he wasn't even satisfied or grateful.

They were in their suite at the Poinsetta and it was just before dinner. The suite consisted of a sunny living-room, done in ivory wicker and gay chintzes, quite in the fashion of the living-rooms of all suites of all "awfully nice" California hotels; a bedroom done in ivory enamel, with rose-coloured hangings, thereby differing from half of the bedroom which had draperies of blue, and, off that, a tiny white bath. Lavinia and Duane took their meals at the hotel, in the dining-room, or the garden or the grill, or at one of the fascinatingly odd restaurants within driving distance of the hotel, and spent their days driving or riding or dancing or loung-

* "Her Honeymoon," by Solita Solano, appeared in the June number of THE SMART SET.

ing, quite as all of the other hotel occupants did.

Duane had finished dressing for dinner, as much as he ever dressed for dinner in California—white flannels. He sat on the arm of the strongest-looking wicker chair and blew smoke out of the window. He had asked permission before starting in to smoke a cigarette. He hadn't found out until after he was married that Lavinia was awfully sensitive to cigarette smoke. She liked to take a couple of puffs of a cigarette, when it was lighted for her, after dinner or luncheon or tea. But, early in the morning, she simply couldn't understand Duane's smoking. And, if they'd been up late the night before, she couldn't bear the odour of smoke until afternoon.

Duane had wanted to get a suite or a bedroom of his own. He would really have preferred it. He was very sensitive about Lavinia waking up and finding him asleep with his mouth open or snoring. But Lavinia had never been alone in a hotel room before, it seemed, and it frightened her even to think of it. Oh, well, when they got back to New York and the apartment they had picked out, he could have his own room and smoke whenever he liked and let his clothes lie around on chairs, too, if he felt like it.

Lavinia was dressing. She had finished her bath and was putting on her underthings very slowly, popping out of the little bedroom after donning each additional garment. She'd run in with a little leap, and ask for a kiss or if Duane still loved her. She had run in, a minute before. She ran in, again, now. She wore an "envelope" of flesh-coloured Georgette crêpe. Duane thought the intimate names of the undergarments rather absurd; there were teddies and envelopes and buds and pierrettes. Over the "envelope" Lavinia had put on a pair of very pretty pink satin corsets, a bodice of laced pink ribbons, adorned with a tiny boutonniere of ribboned flowers in lavender and pink and another garment of flouncey Georgette, cream lace trimmed. She wore open-work black silk stockings and pointed, black satin French-heeled slippers.

"Love me?" she asked again, taking a merry little dance step and jumping into his arms.

"Of course I do," answered Duane.

"How do I look?" She danced away, holding out the diminutive skirt of the just-added bit of lingerie.

"Quite stunning, quite fit for a Follies chorus," he told her.

"Oh, I thought I was heaps more alluring than that." She disappeared into the bedroom again.

"Of course you are," Duane called to her, "but if you don't hurry, we aren't ever going to get any dinner."

"Old bear-hungry," she answered, "doesn't even oo pitty wifes in new underneaths make 'im fordit empty tummy?"

"Of course, of course," laughed Duane, as pleasantly as he could.

He was tired of lingerie, awfully tired of it. In the first place, he'd been seeing lingerie for years and years. Even the most virtuous of our young men can't escape it on the stage and in the shop windows. But Lavinia, ignoring even these two most evident sources, still thought it a daring, rather devilish treat for Duane. Her trousseau contained an assortment of lingerie in sets of fragile Georgette crêpe, in ivory white and lavender and flesh-colour. She told him quite seriously that blue was "awfully poor taste," but that flesh and white were always "good," and mauve and lavender rather "new."

The first days after their marriage had been spent on a tiresome overland train and Duane had had his first peep at Lavinia in lingerie. It had been pleasant, yet disappointing. He had seen her shoulders and arms, of course, in evening dress, but he had pictured her a bit plumper. Lavinia was decidedly thin and a little too dark. Duane wondered, now, how he had ever happened to prefer a brunette. There is something so warm and fresh and pink and gold about blondes.

"What shall I wear, honey-bee?" called Lavinia.

Duane hesitated a second. He knew that the natural "it doesn't make any difference to me" would not do at all. He had tried it and found out.

"Let me see. What about the green dress? I like that," he said.

"The green dress?"

Lavinia came running in and perched on his knee, again.

She ran a finger through his hair and traced a line from the middle of his forehead to his chin. Then she kissed his forehead.

Duane wished that he might tell her that he didn't like to be fingered, that it was too warm for kissing. He didn't dare.

He sighed, ever so slightly, put an arm around her shoulder, kissed her lightly and muttered "you dear" as fervently as he could.

"The green dress?" repeated Lavinia and giggled, a little bubbly giggle that Duane had once thought so fascinating. "Aren't you the funnniest boy! Don't you know that's a sport dress? Why, that's for walks with my honey-bee and out-of-door luncheons, day-time things, though it's turned out much too tight for golf or tennis. Wouldn't I look a fright, coming into the dining-room in that green dress?"

"But we are going to eat out of doors," protested Duane, holding out for his choice.

"I know, dear, but it's not an evening dress, you know. You *are* funny."

Lavinia ruffled his hair slightly before running back into the bedroom. Duane hated having his hair ruffled. But he had read in innumerable short stories that men liked it and he knew that women thought men liked it; nearly all the women he'd known had, anyhow. Oh, well!

He got up, went into the bedroom and combed his hair again. On the bed lay Lavinia's dress, fragile and white. She'd had it out, all the time, of course.

She now pointed to it triumphantly.

"See what I'm going to wear, so my honey-bee can be proud of his little wifes."

She changed, grew serious, alert.

"Here, I've got news for you and I've forgotten to tell you all this time. Guess who's here, right in this hotel and who is going to the Bishops' dance to-night, too, who I saw while you were reading the paper. Guess."

"Give it up," he said, but with interest. "Who is it?"

"Got to guess!"

"Not George De Rahm?" He rather hoped it was.

"That awful fellow. I should say not. Why, it's—it's Parker Hutchins!"

"Your old admirer. Well, really. Did you talk with him? How did he feel, finding you on your honeymoon?"

"He didn't say much, but then, when a girl turns you down for another fellow, you don't feel awfully pleased, I suppose. Still, of course, we mustn't ever mention it to him. Aren't you awfully glad I chose you and not Parker for his horrid old money?"

"You can just bet I am."

Duane felt pleasantly important again. Parker Hutchins was a full five years older than he was and belonged to an older and a bit faster set. Hutchins had a lot of money. And yet Lavinia had actually refused to marry Parker Hutchins just because she didn't love him and had married him, Duane Blair, who didn't have nearly as much money, instead.

Lavinia had told him all about Parker and the real temptation he had been, some months before. Lavinia's people were not at all rich, and her parents, it seemed, had encouraged her to marry Hutchins. But love had meant more than money to her, so she had taken Duane instead.

Duane kissed Lavinia with a trifle more warmth. She was a dear little thing and she loved him. He must be very good to her. Of course Parker Hutchins had wanted to marry her. You couldn't blame him, exactly, for his good taste. It hadn't seemed to Duane that Hutchins had "rushed" Lavinia so awfully much, but you can't tell about a

fellow like that. Certainly Lavinia had had flowers from him, she'd shown them to him herself, and Hutchins had taken her to the theatre and to a number of small dances and she'd told Duane about teas and drives. Well, Hutchins knew which man she preferred now, at any rate.

Lavinia looked very well in the frothy white frock. Her hair was pretty, if it was dark, though Duane wished she wouldn't bunch it out quite so much at the sides. He'd hinted at that, but she had pouted and accused him of not knowing about styles. And she had on a little too much perfume. Lavinia used, seemingly, inexhaustible amounts of her favourite scent. Everything she wore was permeated with it, a kind of sandalwood, an odour which he did not care for. The whole small suite smelled of it continually. And yet Duane knew she used the perfume in order to make herself alluring to him. He couldn't be angry.

Later, perhaps, when he knew her better, he could speak to her about it.

II

THEY found a table under a big pepper-tree in the hotel's garden restaurant. Then came the ordeal of ordering.

It hadn't been an ordeal to Duane before they were married. Then, Lavinia had pretended a pretty indifference to food, had eaten very little, taking bits daintily on her fork, but had always been delighted with his choice of things, had been enthusiastically but delicately tempted.

Now, Lavinia wanted "something different, not just the same old things all the time." She ordered herself, now, usually choosing things she had never tasted or dishes with sauces prepared in a new way, many of which she didn't like after she tasted them. Her appetite, too, was much heartier. She credited this to "the wonderful California climate."

Duane knew he should have been delighted. He knew that she was too slender. Even her mother had hoped the trip would benefit Lavinia and that she'd "plump out a bit." But, somehow, Duane didn't enjoy watching Lavinia eat. He knew it was unnatural of him. He had a good appetite. But, nevertheless, it was decidedly unpleasant to him to watch so much food disappear into her little pouty, rouged mouth. She still ate daintily enough, handling her knife and fork with rather annoying mannerisms. Her table tricks were not annoying when she had eaten only a little. Then they were cunning, interesting. It was only on occasions like last night, when she ate all of a poor little chicken, that they seemed unnecessary.

They ordered dinner.

"Some of those Catalina sand-dabs, with a lot of that nice 'goo' on them," Lavinia begged him, prettily.

Duane hated the word "goo." He ordered the sand-dabs, preceded by lobsters, though he knew that Lavinia would remark again, in apparent fresh amazement, on the fact that the California lobsters had no big claws. He ordered a number of vegetables of which he was quite fond and fresh figs with cream. It was too warm for soup and they had found out that vegetables are preferable to meats in California.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," said Lavinia, as she seemed to be picking daintily at a sand-dab, though in reality she was devouring all of it and its two neighbours. "I just eat and eat. Everything tastes so good in this California air. I'll be fat, as fat as that woman over there in blue. Look at that woman, Duane, you can look now, she isn't looking this way. Wouldn't you just hate to have me turn into a great big fat woman like that? Why do women let themselves go that way? I'd think she'd have more pride. You bet I'd never let myself go like that, even if I were fat."

The woman in blue was not especially fat, Duane thought. In fact, he thought her nicely rounded, pleasantly plump, rather jolly-looking. But he had learned better than to argue with Lavinia about people's appearances. She was always

picking out people in a crowd, tearing them to pieces with evident relish and then pointing a moral, one that always reflected most pleasantly upon herself. . . .

"Look, Duane, there's that Temple woman. No wonder her husband got a divorce. That's what she deserves and you know it. Why, her hat's enough to win a divorce. It's a woman's own fault if her husband divorces her, anyhow. You bet I'd know how to act so that no man could ever divorce me. I always say that if a woman . . ."

Or:

"I wonder if that woman doesn't know her dress is a fright. It isn't the money you spend on clothes. It's a sort of inborn knowledge, I guess. Now that dress cost an awful lot. For years I spent less than any girl in my crowd and yet I always had something appropriate to wear, every place I went. It's the things a woman picks out and the way she puts them on, not the money she spends. . . ."

They got to the Bishops' at ten, after a pleasant walk in the hotel garden, and then rather a rapid ride in a hired motor-car. The Bishops were New York friends who had a home in Southern California and spent four or five months there each year. They had an attractive place of faintly pink stucco, low and rambling, with a red-tiled roof, long arched porches and lovely gardens with fountains and a little, heart-shaped pool.

"It's just like fairyland, isn't it, Duane?" said Lavinia. This was her favourite way of describing the things she saw in California.

They danced on the porches, which ran around three sides of the house. Duane danced mostly with Lavinia. He had always enjoyed dancing with her. She was an excellent dancer.

"Must be getting pretty old," he thought, after one of the dances.

His mind had been more on the floor and the music and the people than on the little figure he held in his arms.

One of the guests at the Bishops' was Theresa Forrest, whom Duane hadn't seen in three years. He had several dances with her. Theresa Forrest was a jolly girl. He'd known her for ages. Her parents and his parents had been everlastingly dragging them to the same summer and winter resorts when they were children.

He had almost forgotten how charming Theresa was. What a pleasant girl! Of course he had never been in love with her, not since they had been children, anyhow. But how wholesome she was, and frank and interesting! Her light brown hair was arranged rather smoothly and her evening gown was severe and straight. She was tanned, too, and the tan stopped abruptly in a square on her neck, leaving her shoulders unusually white.

He liked that sunburn. It meant a lot of pleasant days out of doors. What good times he and Theresa had had together! Of course Lavinia's skin was awfully tender. She had told him so. She couldn't possibly run around the way Theresa did. Theresa was husky, that was it. He had forgotten how much he liked huskiness.

"I think the new Mrs. Blair is lovely, Duane, I do, really," Theresa was saying. "She's so little and dainty and fragile, and sort of aloof. I feel terrifically awkward when I'm near her. And she is so pretty. But then, you've always had good taste in girls. Remember how you used to pick out the belles when you were a little fellow? Do you think she would like to motor over to Compton with us to-morrow, sort of an all-day picnic, not terribly exciting, but good food and splendid bathing if you care to go in."

"Sounds jolly," said Duane.

Somehow the thought of Theresa eating and being fond of food was quite all right. Theresa frankly gobbled when she was hungry, had conventionally good manners and all of that, but made no pretences of tasting and nibbling and mincing things. Theresa was wholesome. Why hadn't he married Theresa? They had been good pals, had had great times together. Theresa wouldn't have refused him. It didn't

seem fair to know, but Duane did know that Theresa wouldn't have refused him. He had been very fond of Theresa and yet it had never occurred to him to propose to her. He wondered, now, vaguely troubled, why he had never even thought of proposing to Theresa.

Duane and Theresa wandered out into the garden. The foliage of palms and pepper-trees looked nearly black, the house had an almost pearl-like translucence. The couples, in light-coloured costumes, strolling on the lawn, seemed unreal, as if they were about to turn into nymphs or dryads. He felt quite happy—and yet it was Theresa and not Lavinia who walked with him in the garden. He felt disloyal to Lavinia, though he knew that his actions were quite correct. It was his heart that was untrue.

They sat on a stone bench near a fountain. How still the night was in spite of the music and the chatter! How still Theresa was!

He remembered, now, how she had a way of sitting silent, not even moving her hands or her feet, and how much he had always liked that.

They spoke, then, about Theresa's winter, her mother was an invalid and still dragged her from one resort to another; about Duane's marriage, Theresa had read about it and had received an invitation, and about Duane's future.

"We'd better be getting in," said Theresa. "You know, young brides are jealous."

"Nonsense! She knows what good friends we've always been. I hope you and she will get along awfully well," Duane said heartily, and he meant it.

"I hope so," said Theresa. Then, as they neared the house:

"There's Mrs. McArthur. She is charming, isn't she? I've something I must tell her. Will you 'phone me tomorrow morning before ten if you care to go on the picnic?"

She ran up the steps and was lost among the dancers.

III

DUANE mounted the steps slowly, then stood leaning against a post, watching the couples who passed him. Parker Hutchins joined him.

There seemed to be an air of happiness about Hutchins, not at all what you would expect under the circumstances.

"How goes the honeymoon?" asked Hutchins pleasantly.

"One of the greatest little institutions in the world," Duane told him.

"Glad to hear that. Matter of fact, I'm rather wild over the idea. I'm—well, I'm seriously planning 'one of the same' myself."

"Good stuff. Congratulations and all that sort of thing. Who is the girl? Do I know her? Didn't know you—"

"Nothing new about it as far as I'm concerned. Margaret Duffield. You know her. Lovely little blonde girl. Fact is, I've been asking Margaret to marry me, on and off, since she was seven. But she insisted on going through college and even lengthened that by spending a couple of years abroad. Never would say yes to me. Not very complimentary, eh? But she gets her degree in June and then she's ready to take on a hubby. The merry wedding day isn't going to get here any too soon for me. Jolly little kid."

"Dandy girl. Double congratulations," observed Duane.

Hutchins went away to tell others his good news. Duane leaned a bit harder against the post.

Why, Lavinia had told him definitely, well, more or less definitely, that Hutchins had asked *her* to marry him. She'd even hinted at ways he had planned to persuade her, a bit of melodrama for good measure. She had given up the money Hutchins represented for *him!* But, of course, if Hutchins was in love with Margaret Duffield, he hadn't been in love with nor proposed to Lavinia.

Why, he'd seen Hutchins with the little Duffield girl, more or less all of his life, come to think of it. But the Duffield girl was always away at school

or in France and he'd never thought much about it. He remembered the Duffield girl, blonde and creamy and smooth-looking and pleasantly rounded. Yes, he could quite get Hutchins' view of her. Be even better looking as a matron, say ten years from now.

But Lavinia had told him . . . it came to Duane quite slowly that Hutchins had been picked out as an imaginary rival because he was supposed to be rather fast and rich and desirable. A rival—to stimulate his courtship! Hutchins hadn't cared at all for Lavinia! And Arthur Roberts or Stuart Morris—it was quite likely that those men, desirable bachelors and all that, hadn't cared either. They had taken Lavinia to dances occasionally, and she had hinted at teas and other things. So, they had had just the effect on him they were supposed to have had. Oh, well, he was married now.

Then Lavinia's voice broke in rather sharply on his contemplations.

"I've been looking everywhere for you. Everyone's been telling me that you've been with Miss Forrest and how often you've danced with her. It's a wonder you wouldn't pay just a little bit of attention to me. Duane, I'm not jealous or anything like that and I hope I never will be, but, well, on our honeymoon, it does rather hurt to see you carrying on, that's what it is, with an old sweetheart like that. Why, Theresa Forrest would have married you in a minute if she could and right now she'd do anything to—to win you away from me. You don't know how women are. You were out in the garden with her. . . ."

Lavinia's voice quivered.

"Oh, come on, honey," said Duane as gently as he could. "You know Theresa doesn't mean anything to me. We're old friends. Let's walk down to that bench under the trees and talk it over. You haven't any reason to be jealous of her."

"Jealous? Of course I'm not jealous!" Lavinia broke in. "I'm taking it for granted you have better taste. You wouldn't suspect me of being jealous of that great big fat person. That's perfectly ridiculous. I just don't want people laughing at you. I never saw anyone look like her in all my life. Imagine coming to a dance with a great square burned into your neck. Even if I were as big and fat as she is, I'd take some care of myself. But that's the trouble with those big masculine women, they just tramp around as if they were men, no wonder they never get married. But, Duane, you mustn't leave me alone like that. Most of all these people are strangers. I was—awfully lonely. I know you don't care anything about Theresa Forrest, do you? Tell me you don't."

"Of course I don't, dear," he said. "Of course I don't. If I had, wouldn't I have tried to marry her?"

Lavinia looked at him sharply, then laughed.

"Mustn't be bad to your honey-bee," she told him. "You know I'm little and kind of helpless and I'm used to being taken care of. I don't like my perfectly good husband to be making lots of eyes at old once-on-a-time sweethearts."

"Don't worry," he told her.

He didn't say anything about Hutchins. He'd pretend to be surprised when he heard of the engagement, even pretend to think it was because Lavinia had refused to marry him. Those things, when you're married . . .

"Want to go on a picnic to-morrow to Compton, with some friends of Theresa Forrest's?" he asked.

"Do you want to?"

"I want to do the things you want to do, dear."

"Well, to be truthful, I don't want to go. But I'll go if you care about it, just to show you I'm not jealous about that great big Theresa. But, honey-bee, I just hate picnics! I know what they'll do—sit around on the sand and run sand races and eat a lot of food at an old inn—I hate things like that. And my skin gets so horrid in the sun, it's awfully sensitive. If you want to go alone . . ."

I should say not! We'll say no

more about it. I just thought it might be a diversion—"

"I don't like picnics or scurrying around. I like breakfast in my room and taking enough time to get dressed and having nice little walks with my honey-bee. We could have a horseback ride if it isn't too warm. I like my new habit, don't you? It's really an awfully good fit. Reynolds says it's a real treat to fit me, he can fit my coats without a wrinkle without even a fitting, if he wants to. He's really a wonder. The way he made my new sand-coloured suit . . ."

They started back toward the house a few minutes later.

"I hate to leave this garden," said Lavinia. "Isn't it perfect? It's just like fairyland. Though I'd hate to have to go this far away from New York every year if it were my house. I'd like a place near New York, where you can have week-end parties all summer—"

IV

As they waited for their car, after telling all of their new and old friends good-bye with the heartiness California engenders and accepting Mrs. Bishop's invitation to dinner on Tuesday, a couple stood near them. Duane did not know either of them. The girl was smiling up into the man's face with an adoring look he had often seen on Lavinia's face when she looked up at him.

"See that girl," Lavinia whispered. "She's a dear—from Texas, named Rogers. They're staying at our hotel."

"That her husband?"

"Oh, no, but they are engaged, I think, or—well, I wouldn't be surprised if they would be soon. He's simply devoted to her, crazy over her. Her parents brought her here—she met him last year—and he came here especially to see her. Miss Rogers says he says he came on business—but you know. . . . His name's Miller, from Seattle, I believe, awfully rich . . . and crazy over her—"

Miller didn't look as if he were devoted. He was talking in a pleasant, indifferent way. Then the girl spoke. Her voice was shriller, higher.

Duane caught the words:

"It'll be perfectly marvellous. I wouldn't go up with anyone but you, but you're so strong and skilful, so able to take care of me. Mr. Tredor asked me to go last week, but of course I wouldn't think of . . ."

In the car, Lavinia snuggled up close to Duane and asked, "Love me, dear? Much as ever?"

"Of course I do," answered Duane as heartily as he could. He put his arm around her.

That couple on the porch! Duane suddenly understood something, now, that he had never understood before. Lavinia's interpretation, "he's crazy over her, not engaged yet, but will be soon," the girl's high voice in patent flattery.

He knew, now, why he had married Lavinia and not Theresa nor any of the other girls he had known and liked. Theresa played square. He would have had to go all the way if he had wanted to get her. He had never thought of proposing to Theresa because she had never forced him to think of it. Lavinia, with her little cajoleries and suitors and flatteries! He couldn't have helped but think of proposing to Lavinia, once she had made up her mind.

Still, she was a nice little thing, a dear. How soft she was, and little! She'd never do anything to make him ashamed of her, too conventional for that. She'd always keep herself well-groomed — self-centred little women like that always do. And, in a way, he did love her. If she would use different perfume and get out of the habit of repeating her repertoire of old jokes and cute sayings quite so often and stop interrupting him every time he picked up a book—

But he could cure her of things like those, or get used to them, in time. She was a nice little thing. After all, she was rather helpless, the helpless sort. She couldn't help that. He'd take good care of her. He was a brute, finding out about Hutchins and being disloyal,

thinking of Theresa, the fourth week of his honeymoon. Years and years and years—of giggles and mannerisms and affectations—of petting and admiration and attention . . . still . . . it wasn't every man could get a nice little girl like Lavinia.

"What's the matter?" Lavinia whispered. "Him so silent. What him t'inking 'bout? Is him 'appy on him's 'oneymoon? Wan-ie, love me much as ever?"

"You bet. I am and I do," Duane answered and kissed her.

FREEDOM

By Leonard Hall

I AM very happy, now that I am free
And have cast off the fetters of her face,
Her voice, her silent laughter, her lithe grace,
And all the dreams that mazed and tangled me.
I know that in the fever and the fret
Of loving her so wholly, the high things
To which my spirit ever burns and clings
Were lost awhile. I have them now. And yet

There was the glory of a summer day,
There was a quiet meadow, flower-starred,
That sloped to meet a merry little stream.
We said gay words, and kissed an hour away;
Laughed, and were silent; found the parting hard;—
Come, Deeds! What am I offered for a dream?

TO show indifference with some degree of perfectness, one must be in love.

A WOMAN often tells the truth to lie out of an embarrassing situation.

THE most pitiful sight is a jealous man's effort to smile.

PHILOSOPHY I

By Buckley McGurrin

I

LITTLE Jimmy Harwick had studied philosophy. Hence he considered himself a rather wise young man. Lolling in the garden's shade, where he awaited the advent of a certain young person named Peggy, he sought to Socratize the occasion.

"Consider that strutting peacock yonder," mused Jimmy, addressing himself, "How utterly useless it is! It has not a single accomplishment. It has no end in life save to strut in the sun and preen those glorious feathers—given it, I suppose, to compensate in part for its utter lack of intelligence. How vain it is, and how ridiculous, since that in which its vanity has rise—its plumage—is a purely biological dispensation! What an insult to rationality is the aspect of such a parasite! It is an unjustifiable foible of civilization. It arouses my disgust, not to say my wrath. It is—"

At that moment the Peggy person tripped gaily out into the garden. Peggy knew as little as possible; she had carefully avoided most forms of thought, since thought may bring eyeglasses and wrinkles, and might very easily prove boresome. She wore an exquisite little *matinée* from Paris, which had cost her father several grunts.

Jimmy turned from his contemplation of the peacock to where Peggy smiled, preening herself in the sunlight.

And ten minutes later he proposed to her.

MARRIAGE is a device whereby the woman a man loves to-day insures herself against the woman he will love to-morrow.

IN order to get a reputation for reliability all one needs is a good memory for the lies one has already told.

FRANKNESS—the faculty of admitting that which you know is impossible to conceal.

RED ROSES

By Leonora Speyer

I

RICHARD DONOUGHMORE felt the change in Lady Helen as soon as he saw her much loved face.

There was a radiance in it, as of a high, white light within, and it seemed to stream toward him, blinding him with its beauty, filling him with a sudden, wild hope.

He stood by the door and she in the middle of the room; and neither spoke for a moment.

Then she held out her hands and he caught them close.

"Hello, Dick," was all she said, but her eyes were like two stars and her voice sweeter than he had ever heard it.

"Hello, my lady." He tried to speak as lightly as she. "I got your message just as I was leaving the House. Thank goodness they found me on the Terrace." He looked at her with a certain significance. "I was glad to hear from you, Helen."

She went swiftly to the point. "Oh, Dick, I was beastly to you the other day! I know I was! And I've been miserable ever since."

The stars grew dim.

"That's all right. Bless you." His words were laconic, but she understood. "You're very beautiful to-day, my dear. What's happened? I can see something has."

They were still standing, he was still holding her hands.

She laughed a little, tremulous laugh. "Nothing has happened — really, I mean. I'm just happy."

The radiance streamed toward him again.

"Are you going to propose to me to-day?" she asked.

"I didn't think I would," he answered calmly, "I made rather a botch of it last time, didn't I?"

Her hands quivered in his, in spite of her arch words.

"Did you, Dicky? Perhaps that was —my fault."

She swayed toward him, and suddenly Richard Donoughmore's arms were round her.

"Helen—"

"Don't speak!" she said. "No, you mustn't kiss me—yet!"

She laid her cheek against his face "Just let me stay like this—for a long, long time. I love you, Dick."

And then their lips met.

At last he spoke. "Is it true? Is it, *is it?* Oh, my dear, I only half believe it!" He put his hands on her shoulders and held her away from him. "I've loved you for six years; ever since I first met you. How you've puzzled me, how you've tortured me, Helen! Helen of Troy!"

She looked at him with wide-stretched, shining eyes.

"I will make up for it," she whispered. "Let me make up for it," and laid her head on his breast.

"What has happened?" he asked again. "Why are you so divinely sweet? You were cruel enough the other night. I wanted to shoot myself. And now—to find you like this!" He caught her to him almost roughly. "If you change again! If you change, Helen!"

Her body trembled against his.

"Trust me," she said. "I shall not change, foolish one."

He held her closer, he spoke almost desperately.

"Kiss me! Tell me you love me."

"I adore you! And I want you to be happy, my own Dick! Happy—and very good to me, please."

Some thought passed like a cloud across the shining calm of her face and just an echo of the old insouciance, the thing that made people who did not know her well, call her flippant, crept into her voice.

"Sit down. I want to talk to you."

She lit a cigarette and pushed the box toward him.

"Would you mind ringing for tea? Thank you, Dicky dear. It's a little early, I know, but I've got a lot to say. Muffins are essential. And we won't be interrupted, once tea comes. Tea, Partridge," she added, looking up as that important member of the household answered the bell, "and not at home to anyone."

Richard Donoughmore was well acquainted with Lady Helen's lightning change of mood. They sat side by side, smoking silently, he waiting for her to speak, her hand in his, she, deep in her shadowy reflections.

"Jack Harrington's back," she said finally, in short, matter-of-fact tones.

He looked straight ahead of him and blew the smoke of his cigarette into the air.

"I know. I saw it in the *Times* this morning."

"I thought you would. Well—what of it?" She turned to him and her voice grew strangely triumphant. "What of it, Dick? *Nothing of it!* That's 'what happened.' Jack's back in London—and I don't care! It means nothing to me, nothing at all," she repeated.

"Why should it?" he answered stolidly and put out the glowing end of his cigarette-stump with great care.

She looked at him with big, tender eyes.

"You're a dear. But you know what I mean all the same. You know perfectly well how tongues wagged about Jack and me!"

"They never wagged in my hearing," said Richard Donoughmore grimly.

He held her hand against his face. "I only hear what you want to tell me." And he kissed the palm softly.

"That's like you, too," she answered. "You *are* the greatest darling!" and grew conventional as the reserved tinkle of the tea-tray sounded on the landing outside.

"You see, Jack had to marry Mabel Carslake," she began abruptly and poured boiling water into the old green and gold teapot. "They'd been—fond of each other, years before. He was a good deal younger than she—Jack was a good deal younger than most people for the matter of that—and she stuck to him like a leech. Called it devoting her life to him. How she hated me! I'll never forget her coming to see me the month after Carslake died. And the things she told me."

Lady Helen sipped her tea reflectively. "It wasn't pleasant. I believe she was good-looking once. Jack would have been a cad; he *had* to marry her, of course, if she held him to it. Have some cake?"

"Must you tell me all this? I'm not in the least interested. I want to talk about you and me," he pleaded.

She looked at him kindly but nodded with great firmness.

"I'm sorry, but I must. And what's more, you must listen, dear boy."

He groaned. "All right. Cut it as short as you can, that's all. And please don't offer me any cake. I'm not hungry."

Lady Helen put another piece of sugar into his tea.

"Dear Dick! And so they married—and lived unhappily for ever after, as the fairy stories do *not* say." She put down her cup. "Six months after that, Henry succeeded in drinking himself to death."

"That's when I met you, Helen," he interrupted and kissed her hand again. "How lovely you were in those black veils."

"The black meant nothing but that all the misery was over. I'd had a dreadful time the last two years of poor old Henry's life; I think I'd have gone mad

if it had lasted much longer. And then —Jack came back to me."

Richard Donoughmore got up and stood by the open window. The old Square looked cool and green and behind its iron railings nurses in immaculate white were pushing babies' perambulators along the well-kept gravel-paths.

Her voice went on evenly.

"I met him one day in the Park. He looked perfectly ghastly. She was making his life a hell, I could see that. We talked under the trees for a long time and then went to Kensington Gardens and had tea and some particularly nasty strawberries and cream."

Lady Helen paused for a moment, but the tall figure by the window gave no sign of answering.

"I want you to know all about it," she continued, a little wistfully. "Even about the strawberries and cream, Dicky," and rose from the sofa and stood beside him.

Two fat little girls with big blue sashes were busily digging up the gravel-paths in the Square, with wooden spades.

"They're not allowed to do that," she said, "bless them."

He turned and caught her in his arms.

"Why do you want me to know about it?" he cried. "Nothing matters but that you and I love each other!"

"I know," she said. "Nothing matters but that—and one other thing. The peace of knowing that that *other* love is dead! Oh, Dick, that is why I have been so 'cruel,' as you call it. I didn't trust myself. I kept wondering what might happen, what I might do, if —Jack came back."

"My poor Helen, was it as bad as that?" And he held her to him.

Her lips trembled and then grew very firm.

"Yes, it was as bad as that. Just as bad as that. Every time we parted—and oh, we parted so many times—I thought that it was over—I hoped that it was over. And then he would come back—and I would be glad! He wanted me to run away with him. I almost did, twice, but thank God something happened to prevent it both times. I had pneumonia once—you remember?—and the other time," she smiled a dubious little smile, the challenging insouciance just peeped out, "I believe we quarrelled about where we should run! He was always mad about India; and I felt I should loathe India, even with Jack."

Richard Donoughmore winced a little and she saw it.

Suddenly she began to weep and tried to free herself from his arms, but they were strong about her.

"Let me go—please—please—"

"Never," he answered, "never again, my darling!"

"I want you to understand," she sobbed. "It all sounds so silly. So—squalid, almost. And it *wasn't!* It was tremendously real, it was beautiful so much of the time. It wasn't a happy love, God knows, but I wouldn't have lost any minute of it! I want you to know this, even if I lose you, I want you to know everything about it, Dick."

He kissed her wild, wet eyes. "Don't cry. I do understand. And you can't lose me, Helen."

"He would send me red roses; and I would know he was coming back. Sometimes they wouldn't come for weeks—and I died a thousand deaths. Sometimes they were there an hour after we had agreed not to see each other any more! And I didn't want them, I hated them! It didn't seem to make any difference, we always found each other again. And we would be happy for a little while."

She took his handkerchief out of his pocket.

"I don't know where mine is," she said forlornly, and went on. "Of course people were talking a lot. *She* saw to that! And he kept begging me to go away with him. I don't know why I didn't. He said I didn't trust him. Perhaps that was the reason. Perhaps it was myself I didn't trust."

They sat together, hand in hand. And her voice was infinitely weary when she spoke again.

"There isn't much more to tell. The

end was inevitable, and rather sudden. Mabel tried to—cut me; succeeded, in fact. And at Ascot, of all places! I wanted Jack to make her apologize—people had noticed it, you see. And he wanted me to go away with him, which wasn't the same thing, was it? I decided overnight to go yachting with the Arlingtons, dull old dears. Japan—China—we were gone a year, a whole year. Jack understood. He never wrote, he never tried to see me, although once we were in Gibraltar within two days of each other. He got something to do in India, you know. I was very sad for a long time, but I was at peace. And I'm sure Jack felt the same. He must have." Again the silence between them. "I never even wrote to him when Mabel died. It seemed so hypocritical to write about his 'sad loss' when I knew how miserable she'd made him! So I left it—and I'm glad I did. Jack and I were always honest with each other, it would have been the one lie between us."

She drew a deep breath. "It's all over. And I love you—if you still want me to."

He knelt at her feet and put his face against her knees.

"Please God you will know peace with me. Will you marry me, Helen?" said Richard Donoughmore.

II

When she came back into the room, for she had left him for a little while, she found him standing by the open window.

A detestable old woman, trying to look like Queen Victoria, had stopped the children from digging up the path, he told her; he was angry about it, he wanted to go down and tell the old beast what he thought of her, he wanted to do all sorts of violent things.

"Muriel Bridges has had her second group of twins," said Lady Helen, leaning happily against him. "Both girls, too. I hear she's furious. Pity she can't just keep the nicest, like kittens." And they laughed together.

"By the way, that came while you were upstairs," and he nodded in the direction of a long, white box that lay across a stool near the door.

"Somebody has sent me flowers. I wonder who."

She held the box on her lap, unpicking the knot with deft, unhurried fingers.

"It's unlucky to cut a knot," she said. "I never do." And lifted the lid.

There, close and dewy and crimson, lay long-stemmed roses, packed tightly together.

The heavy perfume stole up into her face, smote her like soft, over-scented hands.

He turned at her cry and stood beside her, looking into the open box.

"R-r-roses," she stammered.

She sat staring up at him.

Rather clumsily she got upon her feet and the roses spilled about her.

"Dick!" She made a little movement toward him as if for protection against a sudden danger and he saw how pale she was.

"What of it?" He tried to speak naturally, but his voice shook.

She did not answer. She stood there, staring, staring.

"Why do you look like that?" he cried. "Good God, Helen, do you *care?* Do those flowers mean anything to you—now?"

Lady Helen started violently, like someone wakened by a sudden noise.

"No, no," she answered almost shrilly. "They—they startled me, that's all." And she laughed, a little high, misleading laugh that turned him sick. "They positively made me jump."

He stooped and picked up the roses, moved swiftly toward the window with them; but she flung herself upon him, snatched at them, tore them from his hands.

Neither felt the deep-digging thorns though their fingers bled.

"What were you going to do?" she asked, and her face blazed with a fierce anger. "Were you going to throw them away? *My* roses? Were you?"

"I wanted to see what you'd do," he

answered. "I wasn't sure." Their eyes met like strong swords, crossed; and hers fell first.

She hid her face in the great buds and he heard her whispering among the petals.

"He shouldn't have done this; he shouldn't, he shouldn't!" And she spoke a name. "Jack," she said. And again, "Oh, Jack—"

Richard Donoughmore turned abruptly toward the door, but she ran after him, her roses close to her breast.

"I'm sorry. Forgive me, Dick! Please don't leave me like this! It isn't my fault, is it?" And her face became transfigured. "I thought he'd forgotten. I thought I'd forgotten."

"How about me? You seem to have forgotten all about me, Helen."

He stood by the door, just as he had stood two short hours before; and the bliss of those hours swept over him. With outstretched, urging hands he moved toward her.

"For God's sake, throw those damned things away! They're not *real!* Think what you've been telling me, what you've promised me! Look at me, Helen."

He tried to put his arms around her, but she shrank from him.

"I'm sorry. I'm terribly sorry."

She stood there, holding her roses, she was like someone waiting in a hush of expectancy, leaning toward a coming sound, listening—

But not to him.

And he realized as he looked at her that he could not make her listen, nor hear, no matter what he said; and a slow anger began to stir in his heart, against her and against those flaunting flowers. Their odour crawled, snake-like, across her bosom to him and something of their red light seemed to have crept into her face, changing it utterly, devastating its white beauty.

"I'm sorry," she said again, dully, almost mechanically.

He threw up his hands with a gesture of despair.

"*Sorry!* I suppose I must be satisfied with that." And he straightened his shoulders as if taking an unseen weight upon his back.

"All right," he said. "But I don't think I'll forgive you, Helen."

Fate assumes strange guises at times. To all appearances it was Partridge who entered as Robert Donoughmore's fingers sought the knob of the door, to all evidence of ear it was Partridge's smooth tones.

Fate spoke. "Beg pardon, milady, but there's a mistake about the flowers. Hit appears they're for hopposite; Lady Bridges, milady."

And then all Richard Donoughmore's anger left him, all his love for her and all his loyal devotion, rose up in a wave of passionate admiration.

She was magnificent as she put the roses back into the box. Her face was pleasantly expressionless, her voice had a dignified little drawl in it.

"I thought there must be a mistake," she said, and put on the lid of the box. "There was no card. I—I was looking for one."

She did not lift her eyes to Donoughmore as Fate—or was it Partridge after all?—bore off the roses and closed the door. There was a silence in the room and somewhere nearby a clock was ticking its strenuous course.

Suddenly she laughed out loud and went over to where he stood. "'And mistress of herself though China fall!'" she quoted. "Confess it's useful to have been taught early in life by an old rip of a grandmother how to behave before the servants. One up to the Duchess of Merford, Dick!"

Again the laugh, but it rang less true.

"I've been a pretty fool, haven't I?" she said.

He caught hold of her hands.

"Well done, you brave, dear woman."

But at his words her proud banners faltered, her towering ramparts fell with a crash; and she, among the ruins.

He knelt by her as she crumpled up on the big sofa, she let him hold her, she lay like something broken on his breast; and between the sobs that

racked her, she kept saying, over and over, "What a fool—what a fool—!"

But she clung to him again, and that was all that mattered to Richard Donoughmore. She clung to him, she needed him.

"What a fool I've been. Oh, Dick—Dick—!"

Her wet face was pressed against his, her tears were salt, delicious, on his mouth; only her lips she kept resolutely turned away.

The storm passed. He sat beside her as she lay against the cushions, eyes closed, her hot hand tight in his.

"You will forgive me, won't you?"

"Forgive you, Helen! I'm glad, I'm thankful to God it all happened. I understand everything now, I only love you now!"

"How dear you are," she said gratefully. "Big, best friend."

"More than that," he answered, a little hoarsely. "So much more than that, beloved." And his lips sought hers.

But she hid them from him.

"Don't—" she said.

"Kiss me, Helen."

She shook her head and then put her face close to his. "I can't. Please don't ask me."

"Why, little one?" He spoke as to a child, but in his heart was a dread of her answer.

"I can't—ever again. I mustn't. Not now. Not after all that has happened."

"All that has happened? What has happened, except that we are nearer to each other than we ever were?"

She looked at him with a great sadness and a great knowledge in her eyes.

"You don't understand." And the sadness deepened, seemed to float like a mist between them.

"I can never marry you now, Dick."

There was a terrible finality in her words, but he would not listen.

"That's nonsense. Oh, my dear, don't say it! *Nothing* has happened! Think what you were like, think how happy we were before those cursed roses came! Forget them, Helen! Of course you're going to marry me."

The mist rolled round them.

"What if they did come? What then? Have you thought of that?"

He held her to him, he kissed her eyes and her hair. He forced her lips toward his.

"I love you! I'm not afraid of all the roses in England!"

But she struggled away. She rose from the sofa, facing him; and in her voice was a strange, mournful exultance.

"I am!" she said. "I'll always be *afraid!*" And the mist hid her from him. He heard her as from a far distance, and it sounded like bells tolling.

"They won't come; they'll never come, I know. But if they did—if they did—"

"And that's why we mustn't marry," said Lady Helen; and putting her arms around him, kissed him gently.

"Good-bye," she whispered.

He strained her to him, he held her as though he would never let her go, knowing that she was going for ever.

"You'll let me see you. You'll let me be your friend?"

She tried to smile.

"Of course. But perhaps not for a while."

He divined her thought miserably.

"You're going away, aren't you? I shall lose you entirely."

"Only for a little while," she repeated. "I—I *must* go away for a little while. I can't be in London just now."

The ghost of her old insouciance lifted its head with a gallant attempt at jauntiness.

"I'm running away," said the ghost. "I'm a coward, a limp white feather fluttering — not very gaily — in the breeze! Don't despise me, Dicky."

"Promise you'll send for me if you want me, if you need me," he answered, and dropped her hands as he spoke his last words to her. "My darling. Always, always my darling."

"I promise. Good-bye."

But he knew that she would not send for him, that she would not need him.

III

SHE heard the street-door close, she heard his steps on the pavement outside, until distance bore them away.

Against the pale gray of the carpet a spot of colour flashed like a signal in the fading light. It was a rose-petal; its fragrance seemed to whisper faintly.

Partridge came in on respectfully hushed feet, to remove the tea; the trained eye fastened on the petal, the large hand stooped.

London's slow dusk crept into the room; a taxi whirred by.

"Henny extra for dinner, milady?" asked Partridge as he lifted the tea-tray from the little table.

FINALITIES

By Muna Lee

YOU are gayer than I, you are graver than I,
You are wiser and less wise—
Nor can all my passionate answer still
The question of your eyes.
I have given the substance, given the dream,
The doubts and the truth thereof,
I have given you all that there is of me—
And all is not enough.

PEOPLE wonder why men are so greatly attracted by chorus girls. They forget that the chorus girls were picked by men in the first place.

WHEN a woman condones her sister's sin, it is a sign that she is preparing her own defence in advance.

A PLATONIC love affair usually ends in the woman losing her head and the man his liberty.

WISDOM is divided into two parts: (*a*) having a great deal to say, and (*b*) not saying it.

THE COLLAR STUD

By Luke Voring

FROM nine o'clock, when the landlady had entered the slovenly bedroom, where boots, letters, shaving tackle, manuscripts, books, ties, and inkpots lay in a confused welter, until eleven-thirty, when he opened his letters, he dozed in his dishevelled bed, alternately cursing his fate with impotent frenzy and making good resolutions with flaccid strength. The night had been more than usually sleepless, and it was only towards dawn that he had begun to slide into the restless semi-conscious torpor of the insomniac. The post had brought more than its normal number of bills, solicitors' letters, and rejected manuscripts. In glorious relief, however, against the financial clamour was a curt note from the manager of the fiction department of a big newspaper house, asking him to call at one o'clock to discuss a new serial. Yet even this lining to his black cloud was tarnished. Recollections were immediately evoked of that higher literature which he had deserted for this lower journalism. He consequently meditated for another twenty minutes over the great novels which he had not written, the brilliant successes which he had not enjoyed, the steady wealth which he had not accumulated, the astounding "affairs" which he had never achieved, the ideal wife whom he had never married. Just before twelve he decided to pull himself together, and sprang out of bed with a spasmodic burst of energy. Starting to shave, he found that the water was cold. With a crass but popular expletive, he threw himself back on his bed and pulled the old-fashioned bell-rope to summon the landlady. Having repeated the operation abortively four or five times, he decided that the landlady was out, and that he would shave in cold water. He did so, but the razor was almost as blunt as the water was cold. After a hurried wash, he proceeded to search for his clothes. Finally dressed by half-past twelve and surveying himself in the mirror with critical disgust, he realized that he had put on the soiled collar of the day before. Looking at his watch, he came to the conclusion that he ran a risk of being late for his appointment. Punctuality triumphed over cleanliness, and, catching hold of his stick, he ran helter-skelter out of the house. Then, finding that he had left his gloves behind, he scurried back to his room, picked them up, started to leave, looked at himself in the mirror again, and decided to change his collar. The starch on the clean collar was abnormally stiff. He wrestled with it with hysterical ferocity. In the struggle the collar-stud snapped with a derisive click, while the two fragments raced each other into oblivion across the chaos on the floor. For a minute he swore, swore loudly and helplessly, with the spasmodic fury and feeble rebellion of a thwarted child. He sat down on the bed and cried. He looked at his watch and saw that it was a quarter to one. Then he threw himself down on the floor and began to search for the stud, groping now with frantic eagerness, now with desultory indifference. Eventually he discovered one useless half of the collar-stud. He laughed with a vicious but yet feeble irony. Then he ransacked his drawers to find another stud and failed, as he had failed at everything to which he had laid his hand in life, though in point of fact one lay well within his grasp, like the opportunities which he had so often missed. And then the accumulated years of spasmodic and abortive effort, during which he had climbed and climbed and climbed, only each day to slip back a little farther than he had ascended, the long years of self-analysis, self-reproach, and self-illusion, revenged themselves upon him. Striding to the chest of drawers, he took up the razor, and though he had shaved himself with it but imperfectly an hour ago, he made on this occasion a sufficiently workmanlike job of what he had set himself to do.

SHELBY

By Charles Hanson Towne

I

WHEN I sit down to write of Shelby — Lucien Atterwood Shelby, the author, whose romantic books you must have read, or at least heard of—I find myself at some difficulty to know where to begin. I knew him so well at one time—so little at another; and men, like houses, change with the years. To-day's tenant in some old mansion may not view the garden as you did long ago; and the friend of a man's later years may not hold the same opinions the acquaintance of an earlier period once formed.

I think it best to begin with the time I met Shelby on the newspaper where we both, as cub reporters, worked. That was exactly twenty years ago.

The boys didn't take to Shelby. He was too dapper, too good-looking, and he always carried a stick, as he called it; we were unregenerate enough to say cane. And, most loathsome of all, he had an English accent—though he was born in Illinois, we afterwards learned. You can imagine how this accent nettled us, for we were all unassuming lads—chaps, Shelby would have called us—and we detested "side."

But how this new acquisition to the staff could write! It bothered us to see him hammer out a story in no time, for most of us had to work over our copy, and we made Hanscher, the old managing editor, raving mad sometimes with our dilatoriness. I am afraid that in those sadly distant days we frequented too many bars, and no doubt we wasted some of our energy and decreased our efficiency. But every young reporter drank more or less; and when Shelby didn't mix with us, and we discovered that he took red wine with his dinner at Mouqin's—invariably alone—we hated him more than ever.

I remember well how Stanton, the biggest-hearted fellow the Lord ever let live, announced one night in the copyroom that he was going to get Shelby tight or die in the attempt, and how loud a laugh went up at his expense.

"It can't be done," was the verdict.

The man hadn't enough humanity, we figured. He was for ever dramatizing himself, for ever attitudinizing. And those various suits of his—how they agonized us! We were slouches, I know, with rumpled hair and, I fear, not over-particular as to our linen during the greater part of the week. Some of us had families to support, even in those young days—or at least a father or a mother up the State to whom we had to send a monthly cheque out of our meagre wages.

I can't say that we were envious of Shelby because of his single-blessedness—he was only twenty-two at that time; but it hurt us to know that he didn't really have to work in Herald Square, and that he had neat bachelor quarters down in Gramercy Park, and a respectable club or two, and week-ended almost where he chose. His blond hair was always beautifully plastered over a fine brow, and he would never soil his forehead by wearing a green shade when he bent over his typewriter late at night. That would have robbed him of some of his dignity, made him look anything but the English gentleman he was so anxious to appear.

I think he looked upon us as just so much dust beneath his feet. He would say "Good-evening" in a way that irritated every one of us—as though the words had to be got out somehow, and he might as well say them and get them over with, and as though he dreaded any reply. You couldn't have slapped him on the back even if you had felt the

impulse; he wasn't the to-be-slapped kind. And of course that means that he wouldn't have slapped any of us, either. And he was the type you couldn't call by his first name.

Looking back, I sometimes think of all that he missed in the way of good-fellowship; for we were the most decent staff in New York, as honest and generous and warmly human a bunch as anyone could hope to find. We were ambitious, too, mostly college men, and we had that passion for good writing, perhaps not in ourselves, but in others, which is so often the newspaper man's special endowment. We were swift to recognize a fine passage in one another's copy; and praise from old Hanscher meant a royal little dinner at Engel's, with mugs of cream ale, and an hour's difference in our arrival at the office next day. Oh, happy, vanished times! Magic moments that peeped through the grayness of hard work, and made the whole game so worth while.

Well, Stanton won out. He told us about it afterward.

On the pretext that he wanted to ask Shelby's advice about some important personal matter, he urged him to let him give him as good a meal as Mouqin could provide, with a certain vintage of French wine which he knew Shelby was fond of. There were cocktails to begin with, though Shelby had intimated more than once that he abominated the bourgeois American habit of indulging in such poison. And there was an onion soup *au gratin*, a casserole, and artichokes, and special coffee, and I don't know what else.

"He got positively human," Stanton put it, later, as we clustered round him in the copyroom. (Shelby hadn't turned up.) "I don't like him, you know; and at first it was hard to get through the soup; but I acted up, gave him a song and dance about my mythical business matter—I think he feared I was going to 'touch him'—and finally got a little tipsy myself. From then on it was easy. It was like a game."

It seems that afterwards, arm in arm, they walked out into Sixth Avenue in the soft snow—it was winter, and the Burgundy had done the trick—and Shelby, his inhibitions completely gone, began to weep.

"Why are you crying?" Stanton asked, his own voice thick.

"Because you fellers don't like me!" Shelby choked out.

The accent and the stick went together into the gutter, Stanton laughingly told us. An immortal moment! The poseur with his mask off, at last! Beneath all that grease-paint and charlatanism there was a solid, suffering, lonely man; and even in his own dazed condition Stanton was quick to recognize it, and to rejoice in the revelation.

Moreover, he was flattered, as we always are, when our own judgments have proved right. Stanton had deliberately set out to find the real Shelby—and he had.

"A man who can write as he can has something in him—that I know," he had said generously more than once. He made us see that he had not been wrong.

But it was not the real Shelby that returned to the office. That is where he missed his great opportunity. Back strutted the pompous, stained-glass, pitiful imitation of an Englishman, in a louder suit than ever, and with a big new cane that made the old one look flimsy.

We despised him more than ever. For we would have taken him within our little circle gladly after Stanton's sure report; and there would have been chance after chance for him to make good with us. But no; he preferred the pose of aloofness, and his face betrayed that he was ashamed of that one night's weakness. He never alluded to his evening with Stanton; and when Minckle, who was certain the ice had been broken, put his arm around his shoulder the next day, he looked and drawled:

"I say, old top, I wish you wouldn't."

Of course that finished him with us.

"He can go to the devil," we said.

We wanted him fired, obliterated; but the very next evening there was a murder in Harlem, and old Hanscher

sent Shelby to cover it, and his first-page story was the talk of the town. We were sports enough to tell him what a wonderful thing he had done. He only smiled, said "Thanks," and went on at his typewriter.

II

It was shortly after this that Marguerite Davis assailed New York with her beauty—a young actress with a wealth of hair and the kind of eyes you dream of. She captured the critics and the public alike. Her name was on every lip, and the Broadway theatre where she starred in "The Great Happiness" was packed to the doors. Such acclaim was never received by any young woman. We heard that Shelby went every night for a week to see some part of the play—he couldn't, because of his assignments, view the entire performance; and it was Minckle who, after the piece had been running a month in New York, found a photograph of the star in the top drawer of Shelby's desk. He had gone there for a match—you know how informal we newspaper men are. Moreover, the picture had been autographed.

"I wish you wouldn't touch that." It was Shelby's voice. Of course he had come in at the very moment poor Minckle made his startling discovery.

With quiet dignity, and with a flush on his cheeks, Shelby took the photograph from Minckle's hand, and replaced it in the drawer.

"I always keep matches on top of my desk—when I have any," he said, in a voice like ice.

There was no denying his justified anger. No man likes to have his heart secrets disclosed; and Shelby knew that even the Associated Press could not give more publicity to the discovery than Minckle could. He dreaded—and justly, I think—the wagging of heads that would be noticed from now on, the pitiless interest in his amour.

Stanton was the only one of us, except myself, later who ever was privileged, if you care to put it that way, to visit Shelby's apartment—diggings Shelby always called them. There, on the walls, he told us, were innumerable photographs of Miss Davis, in every conceivable pose. They looked out at one from delicate and heavy frames; and some were stuck informally in the mirror, as though casually placed there to lighten up the beginning of each day, or perhaps because there was no other space for them.

"You must know her awfully well," Stanton ventured once.

"I have never met the lady," was all Shelby said; and Stanton told me there was a sigh that followed the remark.

"What!" this full-blooded young American reporter cried, astounded. "You've never met this girl, and yet you have all these—all these pictures of her?"

"I don't want to lose my dream, my illusion," was Shelby's answer.

A man who would not meet the toast of Broadway—and Fifth Avenue, for that matter—if he could, was, to Stanton and the rest of us, inconceivable.

It was at the close of that winter that Shelby left us. Some there were who said he was suffering from a broken heart. At any rate, he began to free-lance; and the first of those fascinating romantic short stories that he did so well appeared in one of the magazines. There was always a poignant note in them. They dealt with lonely men who brooded in secret on some unattainable woman of dreams. This sounds precious; but the tales were saved from utter banality by a certain richness of style, a flow and fervour that carried the reader on through twenty pages without his knowing it. They struck a fresh note, they were filled with the fire of youth, and the scenes were always laid in some far country, which gave them, oddly enough, a greater reality. Shelby could pile on adjectives as no other writer of his day, I always thought, and he could weave a tapestry, or create an embroidery of words that was almost magical.

He made a good deal of money, I believe, during those first few months after he went away from Herald Square. Apparently he had no friends, and, as I have said, invariably he seemed to dine alone at Mouqin's, at a corner table. Afterwards, he would go around to the Café Martin, then in its glory, where Fifth Avenue and Broadway meet, for his coffee and a golden liqueur and a cigarette. That flaming room, which we who were fortunate enough to have our youth come to a glorious fruition in 1902, attracted us all like a magnet. Here absinthe dripped into tall glasses, and the seats around the sides, the great mirrors and the golden curtains, which fluttered in summer and remained austerely in place in winter, made a little heaven for us all, and life one long cry of joy. Here women, like strange flowers that bloomed only at night, smiled and laughed the hours away; and the low whirr of Broadway drifted in, while the faint thunder of Fifth Avenue lent an added mystery to the place, as though the troubled world were shut out but could be reached again in an instant, if you wished to reach it.

Shelby liked to be seen in such places. He said he felt that he was on the Continent, and he liked to get nervously excited over a liqueur and a mazagan of coffee, and then flee to his cosy lodgings in Gramercy Park and produce page after page of closely written manuscript.

The pictures of Marguerite Davis remained a part of the furnishings of those rooms of his—that we heard; and I knew it directly shortly after this. For I, too, left the newspaper, and went into the magazine-editing game. I found a berth on that same popular periodical to which Shelby was then contributing his matchless stories; and part of my job was to see him frequently, take him to luncheon or dinner, talk over his future plans with him, discuss the possibility of his doing a novelette which later he could expand into a full-sized volume and thereby gain an added vogue.

It was during this period that I came to know him so well—came to know him, that is, as intimately as he wished to be known. Always there was a cloak of reserve which he put on with me, as with everyone. I tried to broaden his horizon, to have him meet other men—and women. He would go with me once or twice to some party, for he was clever enough to see that he must not offend me, just as he knew that I must not offend him. We were too valuable to each other, and in that odd mixing up of our affairs in this world here we were, after so brief an interval, in the relationship of editor and contributor.

He knew, however, that I had always admired his literary gifts; but I confess that the feet of clay began to creep into view when he told me, one night at the Martin, that his favourite novelist of all time was—Marion Crawford! That explained so much to me that I had not understood before. I smiled tolerantly, for my own taste ran much higher; and I seemed from then on to sense a certain cheapness in Shelby's mind, as if I had lifted the cloth over a chair and discovered cherrywood where I had hoped to find Chippendale. It is through such marginalia that we come to know people. I could not reconcile Shelby's delicate style with so forlorn a taste for other literary dishes. I said then that he would never become a great writer. He would simply mark time, artistically speaking, after reaching a certain point. Thereafter everything he produced would be but repetition.

I was right. His virgin novel proved a rank failure. The man could do nothing sustained. He was essentially a person of brilliant flashes. The book, called, as you may remember, "The Shadow and the Substance," was a *tour de force* in vapid writing, and it almost severed his literary jugular vein. All the reviewers, delighted with a chance to play upon his title, said it contained far more shadow than substance.

Shelby had had easy sailing up till that time. His pride was hurt by the reception of the book; and he told me he was going to flee to London—which

he straightway did. Then I heard of him in his beloved England; and from there he sent me several short manuscripts filled with his old grace and charm of style—a sort of challenge to his critics. But always we waited for the story with a punch; for the story that would show there was a soul in the fellow. These pale blossoms were all very well—as magazine bait to capture the young-girl reader of our smart periodical; but too many of them cloyed. It was as though you served a banquet and made *hors d'œuvres* the main dish.

Yet his popularity with our readers was tremendous. Letters, addressed in feminine handwriting, came to him in our care every day, from all over the land; and he was no doubt flattered by silly women who were fascinated even more by his fiction after we printed his romantic photograph. For he had a profile that captivated many a girl, eyes that seemed to speak volumes; and no doubt there were numerous boudoirs that contained his picture, just as his rooms contained so many likenesses of Marguerite Davis.

I next heard of him in Egypt, where he said he was gathering colour for a new romance. He stayed away several months, and then blew in one morning, better-looking than ever, brown and clear-eyed. He had been all over the Orient, and he said his note-book was full of material. Now he could sit down quietly and write. He had so much to put on paper, he told me.

But he hadn't. He dreamed adventure, he craved adventure; but nothing ever happened to him. His trips were invariably on glassy seas. He travelled by himself—he hadn't even one chum whom he cared to have share his joys; and though he penetrated the jungles of Africa at one time, the lions remained mysteriously in hiding, and the jaguars didn't even growl.

I remember that this came out one night at a dinner party he and I went to at the home of a friend of mine. A Captain Diehart was there—a most delightful man of fifty or so, who had just returned from a trip around the world; and he fascinated us all by his lively recounting of certain dramatic happenings in the Far East. Zulus had captured him once, and he had come perilously close to death on so many occasions that it was a miracle that he should be sitting here now sipping his champagne and smoking his cigarette.

On the way home—I had a habit of seeing Shelby to his doorstep during this period—he turned to me and said:

"Isn't it strange, Allison, that nothing of that kind has ever happened to me? I move about all the while, I look eagerly for excitement, I hope always for the supreme adventure—and I never find it. Yet I love romance. Why does it never come to me?"

I was silent for a few paces. I felt so sorry for him. For once he had told me what was in his heart.

"You're in love with love," I said finally. "That's what's the matter with your work, Shelby, if you'll let me say so. I wonder if you have really loved a woman—or a friend, even? If the great thing should come into your life, wouldn't it illuminate your whole literary expression? Wouldn't you write eighty per cent. better? Wouldn't everything you do be sharpened splendidly alive? Why don't you meet—Miss Davis?"

"My God, man!" he let out. "Won't you allow me to keep at least one dream?"

He tried to be tragic, right there in the street; but I read him like a book.

"Don't be an ass, old fellow. You're not a poet, you know—you're a happy dabbler in prose; but you've got to wake up—you've got to have some vital experience before you can hope to reach the top. This vicarious loving isn't worth a tin whistle. You're like a soldier in the barracks compared to one who's in the thick of the fight. Wake up, shake yourself, get out of your shell, and see how much greater you'll be!"

He didn't like that. He never liked the truth. How few of us do!

The next thing I knew he was off for Japan, and he sent me pretty post-cards

of geisha-girls, and tried to indicate that he was having the time of his life, at last. But there was something false—I cannot quite express it—about his messages. They didn't ring true at all. He knew it, and he knew that I knew it.

III

When he came back, after a year or so, there was a vast change in him. He was more sure of himself; and in the Martin one night he told me how various other periodicals were now after him. His rate would have to go up, and all that sort of thing. He liked me, and *The Athenian*, but one must grow, and there were wider fields for him to penetrate; and it was all right that we had made him what he was, but in the final summing up a man must think of himself, and one's career was one's career, you know. He brought in several fashionable names, I remember—I don't recall just how he did it; but he tried to appear casual when he spoke of Mrs. Thus-and-So, who had a mansion on Fifth avenue; and he indicated that he often dined there now. They had met in the Orient, and Reggie was a corker, too, and he might summer at Newport, and what did I think of an offer of five thousand dollars from a great weekly for a serial dealing with high life?

He sickened me that evening. Yes, he was a prig, a snob, and I don't know what else. Frankly and coldly, I told him to go to the dickens. Our magazine had existed without him once upon a time, and it could go on existing without him. I was sorry to see him make such a fool of himself.

His whole attitude changed.

"Oh, don't think I mean all I say, Allison!" he pleaded. "I'll continue to give you something now and again. After all, I've got a wide audience with you people, and I don't quite wish to lose it."

That irritated me more than ever—his stupid patronage, his abominable self-assurance. I remember paying the cheque very grandiloquently, and leaving him alone—as he was so fond of being, at one time—in the centre of the room.

When we met thereafter of course we were exceedingly chilly to each other. Once I saw him with Mrs. Thus-and-So, and he cut me dead. I suppose I looked painfully inadequate, utterly unimportant to him that afternoon. He had moved to higher circles; and after all I was only a struggling young editor, who dressed rather badly—all right for certain occasions, but hardly one to be seen bowing to at a moment like this! I read his mind, you see; and again he knew that I knew; and of course he hated me from that time forth.

It was at this time that the phrase "See America First" came into such wide circulation. It was considered the thing to look over the Grand Canyon or the Yellowstone Park, or to run down to Florida, rather than cross the ocean; and I next heard of Shelby in the West, diligently writing—for other magazines. He had brought out one more novel, "The Orange Sunset," and it had gone far better than the first, which must have heartened him and given him a fresh impetus. He changed book publishers, too—went to a smarter firm who did much for him in the way of publicity. And special editions, in limp covers, helped his sales. Even his short stories were brought out, and as little brochures, in gorgeous bindings with coloured illustrations, a single tale would attract the romantic maiden. It was a chocolate-cream appeal; but cream-drops have their uses in this weary world.

The San Francisco earthquake—I believe they always allude to it out there as "the fire"—occurred that next year; and Stanton, who had succeeded old Hanscher in Herald Square—the latter had died in harness at his desk—heard, in that mysterious way that newspaper men hear everything, that Shelby was in the ill-fated city when the earth rocked on that disastrous night. Immediately he telegraphed him, "Write two thousand words of your experiences, your sensations in calamity. Wire them immediately. Big cheque awaits you."

Silence followed. Stanton and I talked it over, and we concluded that Shelby must have been killed.

"If he isn't dead, here at last is the great adventure he has been longing for," I couldn't help saying.

No word ever came from him; but two weeks later he blew into town, and again Stanton found out that he had arrived.

"Why didn't you answer my wire?" he telephoned him.

"I couldn't," Shelby rather whimpered over the line. "You see, Stanton, old top, the thing got me too deeply. I just couldn't—I hope you'll understand—write one word of it."

But it was not the grief of the man who feels so deeply that he cannot shed a tear. It was the craven in Shelby that had shocked the meretricious Shelby into insensibility, into utter inarticulateness in one of the crowning disasters of the ages.

In the face of something so real, so terribly real, he was but a puny worm, with no vocabulary to express his emotions—for he had none, save the emotion of fear. That we knew from people who had been at the same hotel where he was stopping when the great shock came. He ran through the corridors like a frightened doe, in pyjamas of silk, with wonderful tassels of green. He wrung his hands, and babbled like a lunatic. "Oh, my manuscripts! My manuscripts!" were the only intelligible words that came from his white lips.

Think of it! He thought of those piffling stories—those stories of unreality, when he was experiencing the biggest thing that ever came into his little life! Do you wonder that we cared even less for him after that? That I refused to see him at all, and that even wise, understanding Bill Stanton couldn't touch his syndicate stuff?

IV

THERE is, of necessity, a hiatus here. One cannot write of what one does not know. I lost all trace of Shelby during the intervening years, except that I saw spasmodic productions of his in various periodicals, and guessed that he must be working in those same bachelor quarters, probably still surrounded with the pictures of Miss Davis. There were rumours, also, that he went frequently to the opera with very grand people, and dined and supped on Lower as well as Upper Fifth Avenue. It was whispered in editorial circles that he had come to care more as to where he could dine next week than how he could write next week. You see, he was most personable, and he could flatter ladies, and drink like a gentleman, and wear his evening clothes to perfection—he still had them made in London—and that sort of unmarried man is always in demand in New York. Add to these social graces the piquancy of a little literary reputation, and you have the perfect male butterfly.

Shelby fluttered his way through the corridors and drawing-rooms of the rich, and his later work, if you will notice, always touches upon what is called smart society. We heard that he never mentioned his newspaper days—that he was not a little ashamed of having spent so many months bending over a typewriter in a dingy, cluttered office. Yet it was there he had learned to write; and had he been true to the best traditions of those days of exciting assignments, how far he might have gone on the long literary road!

The war came. Of course Shelby was beyond the draft age—quite far beyond it; but he had no ties, was in perfect physical condition, and he might have found in the trenches another contact that would have made a thorough man of him. Again, he had always loved England and the English so dearly that it would not have been surprising had he offered his services in some way to that country when she and her allies so needed assistance. But the lists of those who offered their lives then may be searched in vain for Shelby's name.

I heard vaguely that he had gone to Borneo in September, 1914; and there he remained, "to avoid such a nasty mess as the world had come to." You

see, his was a process of evasion. He loved romance when it was sweet and beautiful; but he had not the vision to understand that there is also a hard, stern, iron romance—the romance of men's companionships in difficult places.

How he did it, I never knew; but he returned from Borneo a year later, and handed to his publishers a novel called "The Blowing Rose," which dealt, as its title would indicate, with anything but the War—a sentimental tale of the old South, full of lattices and siestas through long, slow afternoons, and whispered words of love, and light conversations at dusk, and all that sort of rot. And all the while, outside his door the guns were booming; at the gates of the world a perilous storm had broken. The earth was on fire; but while Rome burned, he, like Nero, played a fiddle—and was content.

Then he wrote a comedy of British manners, and nothing would do but that he must himself journey to London, in war-time, to see about its production there.

Stanton and I happened to see him the day before he sailed. We met him face to face on Fifth avenue, and he bowed to us. We returned the salute, little dreaming that never again would we see him.

For Shelby sailed on the *Lusitania*.

There must be a hiatus here, too; for no one saw him die. The story runs that he must have been in his cabin when the awful moment came—that he was drowned like a rat in a trap. I wonder. And I wonder if he knew in that agonizing instant that he was doomed? But was it not better to die than to emerge again from so great a calamity—so historical an episode—as he had once before emerged, and find himself again inarticulate? At least there can be some glory for him now; for one likes to think that, after all, he might have told us how he felt in so supreme a moment, and linked it, through his delicate art, with his San Francisco sensations. Could those have been revived, and put upon paper? Could Shelby ever have made a fine gesture, known himself as we knew him, and told the truth?

I doubt it. For, looking over his published works to-night, I find only one or two epigrams worthy of a brief existence. And one of those I am sure he filched from an English wit, and redressed it for his purposes. That was the only time he cared for American tailoring.

But poor Shelby! Vicarious, indeed, were all the experiences, save two, of his shallow days. But in the face of each, he was speechless. There is a law of averages, a law of compensation, you know. The balance wheel turns; the tides change; the sands of occasion shift. Fate gave this man one overwhelmingly glorious chance to say something. He was mute. The second time she sealed his lips for ever.

OPERA: A theatrical combination of words and music.
Operation: A very painful experience.

THE FARRELL CASE

(A ONE-ACT PLAY)

By George M. Cohan

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(*In the order of their appearance*)

FRANK BERKLEY
ARTHUR WILSON
MISS WILLIAMSON
ANTHONY GILBERT
STEVE MCCAFFREY
JOHN MADIGAN, *a janitor*
MISS FARRELL
AN OLD MAN
A number of policemen

SCENE: A room in the office of Berkley, Berkley and Berkley. At the rise of the curtain BERKLEY *enters the room through a window after opening it in burglar fashion. Once in the room he looks about to make sure of his ground; goes to desk, opens drawer, takes revolver from same, examines it, makes sure that it is loaded, puts it into his pocket, then goes to R., opens door slowly and peers into the next room. He pulls the door to, conveying to the audience that he has seen someone within, tiptoes over toward safe L. Just as he is about to work the combination the telephone on desk rings. He moves quickly to 'phone, lifts the receiver and talks into the 'phone in a muffled tone.*

BERKLEY

Hello! . . . Yes. . . . Good God! When did that happen? . . . At 12 o'clock to-night? . . . Is she dead? . . . Good God! Have you notified the police? . . . What does Chief Corrigan say? . . . Murder? . . . Good God!

(*A pistol shot is heard off R. He hangs up the receiver and looks off in direction of door R., then takes out his revolver and starts on tiptoes* R.)

WILSON

(*Enters door L. and calls to* BERKLEY *in stage whisper.*) Frank! Frank!

BERKLEY

(*Turns and sees* WILSON *coming toward him.*) Arthur!

WILSON

They're after you, Frank! I just came from Police Headquarters. The girl's sister is there and has told the whole story.

BERKLEY

(*Thinks.*) Good God! Where is the necklace?

WILSON

Here. (*Hands him a jewel-case.*) I've been hiding in the cellar for an hour.

BERKLEY

(*Looks at jewel in case.*) Put it in the safe. Hurry! (*The 'phone rings.* BERKLEY *rushes to it and* WILSON *goes to safe.*) Hello! . . . Yes. . . . I understand. Listen! Rush an automo-

bile to the house on Ninth Street. . . . Get that girl out of the way. I don't care a damn what you do! Kill her if necessary. . . . Those are my orders. (*Hangs up.*)

WILSON

(*Who has put jewel-case in safe and now comes toward table.*) Frank! What are you saying, man!

BERKLEY

You keep out of this, Arthur. My life's at stake as well as yours.

(*A knock at door.*)

WILSON

See who that is.

(*Sits at desk.* BERKLEY *goes to door upstage and exits.* WILSON *watches him off, then goes quickly to 'phone.*) Get me 3100 Spring—and hurry! (*He hangs up.*)

BERKLEY

(*Enters.*) Miss Grace Williamson to see you.

WILSON

Very well.

BERKLEY

(*Comes down to* WILSON, *hands him pistol, then goes to door and admits the girl.*) Come right in, Miss.

MISS WILLIAMSON

(*Entering.*) Oh, how do you do, Mr. Wilson. I'm sorry to come on such an errand, but it's life or death and means so much to so many.

WILSON

I understand. Won't you be seated?

MISS WILLIAMSON

Thanks. (*She sits.*)

WILSON

Have you brought the letters?

MISS WILLIAMSON

Here they are. (*Produces them from handbag.*)

WILSON

All of them? (*Takes them.*)

MISS WILLIAMSON

No, one is missing.

WILSON

One missing? Good God! Where could it have gone?

MISS WILLIAMSON

It was stolen from the house on Ninth Street the night the Farrell girl disappeared.

(BERKLEY, *who has gone to water-cooler to take a drink, drops the glass and it falls with a crash.* WILSON *and* MISS WILLIAMSON *both turn and look at him. He stands watching them both.*)

BERKLEY

It's a lie! This is a conspiracy against me—against the United States Government, and, by God, I'll not stand by and hear my death sentence read without sending the whole lot of you devils to the chair!

WILSON

Be careful, Berkley.

BERKLEY

I'm not afraid of you, Wilson. I'll tell the truth.

MISS WILLIAMSON

(*To* WILSON.) Who is this man?

BERKLEY

My name is Frank Berkley.

MISS WILLIAMSON

Good God! (*To* WILSON.) Why didn't you tell me?

WILSON

(*Laughs.*) So now you understand! You see, my little lady, that at last you've got to come across with the truth. No more lies, do you hear? Now then, *where is Anthony Gilbert?*

BERKLEY

Yes, where is he?

GILBERT

(*Enters door upstage, unheard and unseen.*) Right here! (*They all turn and face a pointed revolver which he is*

aiming at them.) I'll ask you all to step quietly into that room over there. (*Indicates door R.*) And to do this without a sign or a sound. I've got a little business to transact with your desk and your safe, Mr. Wilson, so be kind enough to hurry.

MISS WILLIAMSON

Anthony, what do you mean?

GILBERT

You go to hell! I'm done with you! I knew you'd bring those letters here. But I've got the real one; the one written by your sister to this man Berkley, which is evidence enough to hang you all. Step into that room, please, as quickly and quietly as you can.

(*The three move toward door R.* GILBERT *enters and he is followed by* MCCAFFREY.)

GILBERT

(*To* MCCAFFREY.) Lock that door, McCaffrey, as soon as they are on the other side.

MCCAFFREY

All right, Chief.

(*The three characters exit into the other room,* MCCAFFREY *locking the door.*)

GILBERT

(*To* MCCAFFREY.) I'll take that key. (*Holds out his hand.*)

MCCAFFREY

No, I'm damned if you will, Gilbert! (*Puts key in his pocket.*)

GILBERT

What do you mean?

MCCAFFREY

I mean that you're not going to double cross me to-night. I want what's coming to me, Mr. Gilbert, and I won't hand these people over to you till I get it.

GILBERT

Damn your soul! (*He pulls the trigger of his revolver, but it does not explode.*)

MCCAFFREY

Oh, I made sure it wasn't loaded before I handed it to you. I expected something like this. Now then, Mr. Gilbert, I want my money, or you go right back to the house on Ninth Street. Do you get me? (*He points his pistol at* GILBERT. *The 'phone rings.*) See who that is. Do as I tell you, Gilbert.

GILBERT

(*Hesitates, then moves to 'phone.*) Hello! . . . What? . . . Just a moment. (*To* MCCAFFREY.) It's Police Headquarters.

MCCAFFREY

(*Thinks.*) You lie!

GILBERT

So help me God! Somebody called them up from here, they say.

MCCAFFREY

It's a trap.

GILBERT

What will I say?

MCCAFFREY

A mistake—wrong number—then hang up.

GILBERT

(*Into the 'phone.*) There must be some mistake. Nobody called from here. (*Hangs up. A knock at the door is heard.*)

MCCAFFREY

See who that is. (GILBERT *hesitates.*) Do as I tell you, Gilbert.

GILBERT

(*Hesitates, then goes to door and exits.*)

MCCAFFREY

(*Goes quickly to 'phone.*) Operator, get that same number again. . . . Yes. . . . Hurry up. (*Hangs up.*)

GILBERT

(*Re-enters.*) It's the janitor from the house on Ninth Street. He wants to see Mr. Berkley at once.

McCAFFREY

The janitor to see Berkley! Does he know Berkley?

GILBERT

I don't think so. He's in a terribly nervous state.

McCAFFREY

Show him in.

GILBERT

(*Goes to door.*) Come in, Madigan. (MADIGAN *enters and looks around.*)

McCAFFREY

What do you want, my good man?

MADIGAN

(*Who speaks with a heavy brogue.*) I want to see Mr. Berkley. Are you Mr. Berkley, sir?

McCAFFREY

Yes, I am Mr. Berkley.

MADIGAN

I'm John Madigan, sir, the janitor of the house in Ninth Street where the poor thing was killed. I've come to confess to you, sir, that I saw the crime committed and 'tis only now that I've been able to pluck up courage enough to tell it all, sir.

McCAFFREY

All right, Madigan, let's hear it all. Who killed the girl?

MADIGAN

'Twas a man named Gilbert, sir—Anthony Gilbert.

GILBERT AND McCAFFREY

What!!

MADIGAN

Yes, sir, that's his name—Anthony Gilbert.

GILBERT

(*After a pause.*) Would you know this man Gilbert—if you were to see him again?

MADIGAN

Of course I would, sir. I could never forget the man. I stood as close to him as I'm standing to you now.

GILBERT

My name is Anthony Gilbert.

MADIGAN

What!

GILBERT

I am Anthony Gilbert.

MADIGAN

You are Anthony Gilbert!

GILBERT

That's my name.

MADIGAN

But Mr. McCaffrey said that the other man's name was Anthony Gilbert.

McCAFFREY

Mr. McCaffrey!

MADIGAN

(*To* McCAFFREY.) Yes, sir. He was the man who stole the necklace when Gilbert killed the girl.

McCAFFREY

Why, my name is McCaffrey.

MADIGAN

What! Not Steve McCaffrey!

McCAFFREY

That's my name.

MADIGAN

(*To* GILBERT.) And you are Anthony Gilbert?

GILBERT

I am.

MADIGAN

(*Whips out two revolvers and covers them. Speaks without brogue.*) Hands up, gentlemen! (*They throw up their hands, and at the same moment two police officers enter from door upstage.*) Take these men to Police Headquarters.

McCAFFREY

What does this mean?

MADIGAN

It means that I've got you two dirty skunks just where you belong—in the

arms of the law. Take them away, boys.

(*The two officers come down stage and each one takes a prisoner.*)

GILBERT

(*To* MADIGAN.) Who are you?

MADIGAN

My name is Parkinson, of the Central Office staff. (*Shows his star.*) All I need now is to round up Berkley, Wilson, and the Williamson woman, and I will have solved the mystery of the house in Ninth Street.

(*Three pistol shots are heard off stage, coming from room R.*)

ALL

Good God!

(*The 'phone rings.*)

MADIGAN

(*At 'phone.*) Hello! . . . Police Headquarters? . . . Just a moment. (*To* MCCAFFREY.) Did someone call Police Headquarters? (*He turns to the 'phone as* MCCAFFREY *makes no reply.*) No, there must be some mistake, no one called from here. (*Hangs up.*) What is this? Are you trying to set a trap for me?

(*As he speaks this line he moves over near one of the policeman, who hits* MADIGAN *over the head with a club, and the latter falls to the floor.*)

1ST POLICEMAN

I've got him at last, the yellow dog! I took a solemn oath I'd get him, and, by God, I've got him!

2ND POLICEMAN

Never mind any grandstand speeches, let's get the money. He's got it on him somewhere. (*Rushes over to* MADIGAN'S *body and takes a wallet and letters from coat pocket.*)

GILBERT

What does this mean?

MCCAFFREY

Who are you two men?

1ST POLICEMAN

Never mind who we are.

2ND POLICEMAN

Yes, don't ask too many questions. (*They divide the money as they are speaking. There is a knock at the door. All four stand perfectly quiet. There is a second knock.*)

1ST POLICEMAN

(*To* 2ND POLICEMAN.) See who that is. (2ND POLICEMAN *goes upstage and exits.* 1ST POLICEMAN *turns to* GILBERT *and* MCCAFFREY.) Get in that room, both of you. Hurry up. (*The two men hesitate.*) Do as I say! (*They move to the room at left and exit.*)

2ND POLICEMAN

(*Re-enters.*) It's the Farrell girl.

1ST POLICEMAN

The Farrell girl! Good God!

2ND POLICEMAN

She came here to see Miss Williamson.

1ST POLICEMAN

Show her in.

2ND POLICEMAN

With the body on the floor? (*Points to* MADIGAN'S *body.*)

1ST POLICEMAN

Do as I tell you!

2ND POLICEMAN

(*Calls off.*) Right this way, Miss.

MISS FARRELL

(*Enters.*) Thank you, officer. (*Sees the other officer.*) Is this the office of Berkley, Berkley and Berkley?

1ST POLICEMAN

Yes, Miss Farrell.

MISS FARRELL

Oh, you know who I am?

1ST POLICEMAN

Yes, Miss Farrell. Won't you sit down?

MISS FARRELL

Thank you. (*She starts to sit down and sees body of* MADIGAN.) Good God! What is that? (*Over to him.*) Father! Father!

2ND POLICEMAN

Her father!

1ST POLICEMAN

Good God!

MISS FARRELL

Who did this terrible thing? This must be the work of Anthony Gilbert and Steve McCaffrey. I swear to God that I will kill them both.

(*Two pistol shots are heard off left.*)

ALL

Good God!

(*The wind begins to blow outside and the rain dashes against the windows. A lightning and thunder storm breaks.*)

MISS FARRELL

(*Her voice above the storm.*) I swear, father dear, that I will avenge you! I will search the world for the man who committed this horrible crime. I will leave no stone unturned to find the man who killed my father!

2ND POLICEMAN

(*At the window.*) Good God, what a storm!

MISS FARRELL

You shall be avenged, dear father—you shall be avenged!

1ST POLICEMAN

(*Hits the Farrell girl over the head with a club. She falls over the body of her father.*)

2ND POLICEMAN

(*Rushes at him.*) Good God, man, what have you done? Do you realize that you've killed the girl?

1ST POLICEMAN

(*Hits the* 2ND POLICEMAN *over the head with the club, and the latter falls over the body of the girl. There is a knock on the door.*) Come in.

(*An* OLD MAN *enters. The* POLICEMAN *shoots him dead and the* OLD MAN *falls near the door where he enters.*)

OLD MAN

(*As he falls.*) Good God!

1ST POLICEMAN

(*Rushes to 'phone.*) Get me 3100 Spring. . . . Hello! . . . Hello! Police Headquarters? . . . Send a man to the office of Berkley, Berkley and Berkley right away. Hurry! (*He pulls out pistol and shoots himself in the temple.*) Good God! (*He dies at desk.*)

(MADIGAN *shows signs of life and wriggles himself to a sitting position. Sees the dead men and stares in amazement.*)

MADIGAN

(*As he sees the dead men.*) Good God!

(*He struggles to his feet, falls back again, but gets strength enough to drag himself over to phonograph, which is upstage. He touches the spring and starts it playing a brass-band march, one of Sousa's. He faints after starting the machine. There is a sudden crash, and the window is broken from the outside.* A POLICEMAN *enters, gun in hand.*)

POLICEMAN

(*Looks around at the dead bodies.*) Good God!

(*Horses' hoofs and police patrol effect are heard offstage. Another* POLICEMAN *enters from door upstage. The two officers stand and stare at each other, then both tear off their coats and start a rough-and-tumble fight. The orchestra picks up a gallop for a "Hurry." The two officers roll over and around the stage and finally work into an acrobatic act. Both are turning handsprings when* UNCLE SAM *appears in doorway waving the English flag as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

THE LOST ART

By L. M. Hussey

I

KENNELL learned of Julia's fortunes a few weeks after his return to the United States. The incidents of her history came to him through an old acquaintance, who remembered his former profound attachment and presumed that however modified by time and his marriage something of his former interest might still persist.

To learn these things about Julia seemed natural, for the emotions of his return had been largely reminiscent, the half-sentimental feelings that always arise in the moods of a man who comes back to old scenes upon which he can only look with a retrospective gaze, having no longer a rôle in them.

Kennell, especially, was unable to do otherwise than look backward, since he did not identify his future with his native land. He regarded his trip as the last step in an important obligation, about to be permanently fulfilled.

He had come in final acquiescence to the pleading of his wife, and however alienated from the sympathies he had once felt at home, he was not the man to deny her urgent, emotional wish in these last months of her life.

He was rather glad that his personal feeling was one of great shrinking from the trip, for this made it something of a sacrifice and therefore an atonement. Somehow he had never achieved the habit of love with his wife, perhaps because he had burned out his illusions in the flame of his earlier dreams of Julia. His wife had quickly perceived the meagreness of his response to her, and without direct complaint she had nevertheless accused him in subtle ways throughout the whole decade of their relationship.

Hints first spoken years ago had made him aware of her recognition and at that time he had essayed a sincere and naturally unsuccessful effort to fulfil her want. He found it useless to simulate an ardent posture, and in the end she accused him of the sham, told him he was insincere, whereupon he abruptly ceased his unconvincing play-acting. Then his wife assumed the sentimental melancholy that became as much a part of her presence as any of the physical characteristics that identified her—her brown eyes, her rather drooping mouth, her dark hair worn high and severely.

There was no brutality of quarrelling between these two, both possessing a common quality of sensitive refinement, but the shadow upon their relationship did not wholly injure the woman. It hurt Kennell. In his sensitiveness he felt that he had cheated this woman, arousing an expectation in her heart that he was wholly unable to fulfil. His sophistication told him that no one would have given her the measure of her dreams, since she was a natural romantic and doomed on that account to an inevitable disillusionment. But this recognition, after all, did not ease the discomfort of his self-accusing, for he realized also that he had given less than her reasonable right.

The last two years, those of her gradually augmented illness, had discovered him in the fruitless effort to substitute an attentive and almost superlative kindness for the romantic gifts that were still her desire. Although he had already thoroughly identified himself as an Oriental, both in material and spiri-

tual interests, he readily consented to go back to the United States when the genuine potency of her nostalgia became apparent.

They arrived in New York in the early spring. The season was late, the days bad, and for a time Kennell was afraid that she would scarcely live out the first month of her return.

It was her wish to remain in the city, renew old friendships, see old faces. She realized the uselessness of going to a more favourable climate, since she was beyond the benefit of such influences. She survived the first perilous weeks, her cough lessened, a measure of her strength returned, and Kennell found himself with more time to go about the city and touch on points of his former life.

It was during this period that he learned the history of Julia.

She had been married and widowed, and was living in the comfortable establishment of her late husband, his informant had said. "She doesn't go about much," he added. "A rather solitary, but still handsome, woman, and not on the shelf by any means. Could have married again at least twice in the past year or two, but she seems to prefer her own way."

They talked about her over a luncheon table in the unsentimental surroundings of a fashionable restaurant with none of the caressing grace that had become the accompaniment of dining in Kennell's foreign life. Nevertheless, after parting from his friend, he did not find it difficult to achieve a thoroughly reminiscent mood, for the discomforts, the lack of comradery in American life did not depress him, viewing his stay, as he did, no more than a temporary necessity.

It was one of the first agreeable afternoons of the season, and Kennell walked down the Avenue, a unit in the crowd, but emotionally detached from it, as if he were one of another race. He automatically obeyed all the necessary conventions, he did not hurry, he jostled no one, he paused at the corners when the flow of vehicular traffic made it necessary, but his thoughts were back in another decade.

Without the pain of any profound regret he was considering, with a large measure of objectivity, the features of his grand passion. It pleased him to recall incidents rather than emotions, save when incident and emotion were composed in an inextricable union. He looked back upon romantic, moonlit evenings, upon a certain week when both were in the same mountain hotel and had quarrelled one day and parted for ever and forgiven each other a few hours later with rapturous pledges of renewed faith, upon hours when he had laboriously confected the only literary venture of his life—the poems he felt impelled to write for Julia—and, again, upon their last parting.

That had come one evening; he remembered their quarrel. His mind brought back the sudden, undignified personalities. It had grown out of trivial differences of temperament, a momentary breach of mutual sympathy, and had suddenly grown up into serious proportions. In the end he had accused Julia of interest in another; she had resented his words with a swift anger. They parted; he had not gone back, waiting for her to send; she had not recalled him, waiting for him to come.

It was foolish now and had all the incredible colour of past acts whose substance, in retrospect, is always so slight, and whose consequence frequently so profound. Walking through the crowd, Kennell neither smiled at his memories nor sighed, but only wondered.

Then he found his mind leaping on through the years to the immediate moment, as if transported from one world to another on a magic carpet. How did Julia look to-day?—and how would she receive him?

It was with something of a shocked surprise that he realized the possibility of calling upon her, for his mind, looking only into the past, had just in that second returned to immediacies. It was astonishing to think that both of them were still realities, he and Julia, that

they might meet, clasp hands, talk together again.

This realization gave him no thrill, for he was not deluded with any sudden hope or desire. But his curiosity persisted. It was the natural residuum of a former profound interest.

With these thoughts he tried to vision the changes ten years would have made. He recalled his acquaintance's somewhat blunt description—"a rather solitary, but still handsome, woman."

If this were an accurate characterization the alterations must be considerable. He had once regarded Julia as beautiful—now she was handsome. The word showed him a face whose early sweetness had been exchanged for the dignity of a maturer repose. He felt that such a face would be agreeable. No doubt the qualities of her mind were similarly remoulded. To see her, he thought, would be a legitimate attention.

When he returned to his rooms, after dinner and after his wife had gone to bed, he wrote her a half-formal, half-cordial little note, and mailed it the next morning.

Her reply came promptly, written in a hand that seemed to have taken on some of the new firmness with which his imagination invested her character. He was invited to call.

II

When the appointed day came he found certain difficulties in the way of keeping the engagement. His wife's health had taken a serious turn for the worse. She was confined to her bed, and when he remarked that he was going out she objected, telling him that no one was coming to see her that afternoon and that she would be lonesome.

Her desire for his company was no more than a momentary whim, and therefore he did not exaggerate its call upon his duty. At the same time, in the face of her request, he found it a little difficult to go without making an adequate excuse,which was not possible.

He shrank from telling her about Julia, feeling that she might misconstrue his interest. So he departed at last without making an explanation and his wife followed him with reproachful eyes as he left her side.

Her reproachful air, however unreasonable, left its shadow upon his spirits. Riding in a taxi to Julia's home, he began to wonder why he was going there, and he endeavoured to analyze the impulse that had resulted in penning the note to her. It now appeared foolish, unnecessary, and the prospect of meeting her a bit unpleasant, for his old emotions were only memories, and he had no thought of reviving them.

But it was too late to retreat from the consequences of his letter-writing impulse. The cab drew up at her home and he mounted the unfamiliar steps and rang the bell.

A maid admitted him, took his card, and led him to the reception-room. He sat down and waited. There was nothing here to remind him of Julia.

He came to her now in a different house and under more expansive conditions of living. The room, furnished with a certain heaviness of large oak chairs and a stolid old table, did not interest him. He stared at the pictures on the four walls, mostly formal landscapes, apparently the work of one man, but his eyes scarcely recorded any of their correct details.

Then Julia came in. He stood up and they faced each other.

Her lips were reposeful; she was not smiling. Her eyes, still the remembered half gray and green, with their curious suggestion of chatoyance, met his own speculatively.

She had never been strictly slender, and her figure was fuller now, but still not without its grace of curves. The change in her physical self was less than those images he had made of her in his imagination.

He had been prepared for a formal greeting, and she disconcerted him with her opening words, taking them both back to the circumstances of their old parting.

"You've been a long time returning

to me, George," she said. "When we quarrelled that night I didn't imagine ten years would pass until you came back."

The quality of this greeting was so unexpected and its intention so obscure that Kennell was unable to reply directly.

He stepped forward, holding out his hand, and took her own for a moment.

"How are you, Julia?" he asked. "Only the unexpected brings me here. I never believed I would return to the United States again."

She motioned him to a chair, which he occupied after she herself was seated.

"I heard you were here before your letter came," she said. "I wondered whether you would let me see you. I wanted to. . . ."

"Did you, Julia? I'm glad of that, because, coming here to-day, I found myself very doubtful. I couldn't think of a good reason to explain my visit, that is, to explain it to you. As for myself, I've been trying to discover some of the colour of my old life in this city —but it has been hard. Too many changes, in things . . . and myself."

He paused, and raised his eyes to her face.

She half met his gaze and half looked beyond him, as if into the scarcely distinguishable figures of the past.

For several moments she was silent.

He watched her without embarrassment and with a touch of wonder, for the old memories of his former emotions in her presence came up into his mind like chromatic pictures from a forgotten, well-loved book, and it astonished him a little to recognize the past, indubitable reality of these feelings. So it was curious to sit near her now in such a quietude of the senses.

"I was a little apprehensive about this meeting," she murmured finally.

"Why, Julia?"

"Well, I can't quite explain, I don't know entirely myself. For one thing, I was afraid it might be hard to talk with you; I was unable to see how we *could* talk without making some reference to other times."

"And why shouldn't we?" he asked, denying his former expectation and intention. "If I haven't been able to recover entirely the spirit of my old life, at least it's been possible for me to discover a recollection of its atmosphere here and there. I ought to be able to feel more like my old self here with you than in any other place, or with any other person."

She nodded, as if in complete comprehension. Now Kennell was moved a little by the touch of reposeful reminiscence in her manner; by her quiet sincerity she evoked some of the reality that had been only the memory of her charm which no conscious striving on her part could have effected. He found himself glad to be with her, glad he had come.

"Of course I've thought of you a great deal in these years," she was saying. "And I found this a strange thing —but as time went on you became more real to me than in the days when we were actually together."

He looked at her with the raised brows of question and surprise.

"I don't mean that you weren't real then, but I think you were sometimes too vehement to be wholly convincing. Occasionally you used to frighten me and leave me with doubts—you declared so much to me and with such earnestness. Well, time has made me forget some of your words and some of our hours and remember others. The memories became fixed, crystallized, I might say, and so you grew out more definitely. The past two or three years I've seen you very plainly and known you better, I think, than I knew you ten years ago."

Her murmured and somewhat hesitating confidence touched Kennell's vanity, for it was pleasing to be so frequently and well remembered, and a new experience; others had easily forgotten him.

For the first time since thoughts of Julia had become a part of those feelings associated with his homecoming, the emotion of regret stirred in him as a new and significant figure. She, too,

was real, more real to him than any other woman of his knowledge. No events of his life, he suddenly perceived, had given him more the intensity of reality than those of her association. As from necessity he questioned her now.

"Do you find me changed?" he asked.

She shook her head slowly.

"I don't know," she said. "It's too soon for me to see you as another person, if you've really altered into a different one. As you sit there I can only see you as you were."

Her words startled him, as if the very quietness of their utterance accentuated the profundity of their significance.

"Then," he answered slowly, "you are able to get the better of time. It is almost as if the years were days—and I had just come back as you expected me to, as I wanted to. . . ."

She did not answer in words, but seated as before, in a repose that gave assurance to the mood she had evoked in both, answered with a slow, assenting nod.

He was unable to resist the urge to response, and he did not pause to consider that subtle progress by which his emotions in her presence had emerged out of their long nirvana into shapes that simulated his old ardour. Even the physical changes seen in her face and form when she had come through the door and greeted him first now vanished and left her as the old desired self. He looked into the greens of her eyes and the one-time thrill of their depths was renewed in his recrudescent senses.

An experience like that of living again astonished and enchanted his mind as the obscure recollections of old emotions leapt up into his senses as realities. He did not hesitate to reach out and take her hands, and found no surprise, but only a delight, in her yielding. The wanting of her lips obsessed him with all the urgency of former years. He drew her close to him, and put his arms about her and kissed her.

For a moment after he had released her from this embrace she sat with her eyes half closed, as if under the spell of her reawakened senses.

Then, raising her head swiftly, she looked at his face with a startled glance.

In the impetuosity of his feelings he ignored any significance in her gaze; he had found speech a necessity, a quick assurance of their future a requirement for words.

"As you must have heard, dear Julia," he said, "I came back from the East to bring my wife home. I felt a duty toward her and I still feel it. I have never loved her; that's an emotion to which I've been dead until now, when the old time has come back again. The doctor in the East told me she might live six months and the doctors here have given her less time. I know you're able to understand my sense of duty and won't ask the impossible from me. I can't leave her; I must see it through with her. And then—"

He paused as she stood up suddenly, looking down at him with a gaze still startled and into which had come also the elements of an enigmatic surprise. She put out her hand in a restraining gesture.

"Don't tell me any more now," she whispered. "Please go now, dear, and let us talk about all this when you come again. I feel confused, I want to be alone and think. I can't even explain my curious feelings now; you must wait until next time."

He was a little disconcerted at the abruptness of his dismissal, yet, in a way, it seemed natural and was not unpleasant. There was a dramatic fitness in leaving her now, before the first moments of renewed ardour could decline into anything less poignant. He took her in his arms again, kissed her lips, that were now quiescent to his pressure, and left her with a soft good-bye.

III

When Kennell returned now to the apartment which he occupied with his wife he found her suffering from a sudden and alarming relapse. His mind came back to her needs and existence by

a process of abrupt transposition. During his return from the hour with Julia she had scarcely been in his mind. His thoughts had been mainly those of a complex wonder, wonder, in part, at his fatuous conviction that he was impotent to emotion, and wonder in a more general way upon the incalculable turns of life.

He found his wife lying very still upon the bed, her face like a death mask. The doctor was still present; their maid was acting as nurse.

Kennell learned that she had suffered a hæmorrhage and that for a period they had feared her death before his return.

"I don't know whether she'll pull through this or not," the doctor told him privately. "One can never calculate the exact course of phthisis. Some of the victims, as you know, put up an astonishing battle. But I can't give you a great deal of hope."

Kennell listened without definite emotion; if anything, he was surprised at his lack of emotion.

After a few moments in the sick-room the customary indifference of his feelings had come back to him as if their lethargic course had never been turned aside by the recent flood of his ardour. The hour with Julia that had loomed up at last as the only reality in a decade of shadows was now itself a shadow, and this room, his pallid, half-unconscious wife, the maid, the doctor, the aromatic odour of disinfectants, were the only veritable figures and conditions of his existence. A faint, puzzled frown lined his forehead as he listened to the physician explaining her chances.

Later, alone with her in the room, he sat down at the bedside to be near for the attending of any need. Apparently she was sleeping or comatose. He was surprised after a moment to find her with opened eyes looking up into his face. Her gaze was intelligent, unfilmed with any stuporous depression.

"I'm glad you're here," she murmured.

Her words touched him a little; he pressed her hand.

"I want you to do something for me," she said.

"Certainly. What is it?"

"Go into the next room and look in my trunk. You will have to lift out the upper tray. Then you'll find a square package done up in thick paper. Please bring it to me."

He arose mechanically, glad to leave her for an instant. Her pale face, her brown eyes, more melancholy in her illness, affected him unpleasantly. In an irrational way he felt ashamed; after all, he had cheated her. He had never given her a single moment of her romantic expectancy.

He found the package in her trunk; it seemed to be an old one, preserved for a long period. The heavy string with which it was tied was worn in places as if the contents had been opened and refastened many times.

He returned to the bedside.

"Do you want me to unfasten this for you?" he asked. "What is it—a bundle of letters?"

She nodded.

"Yes," she added in words. "You can untie it presently. I believe the time has come when I should give them back to you. Years ago, when I discovered them, I hadn't the courage to give them to you nor to destroy them. They—they showed me the foolishness of my hopes."

Her words startled Kennell out of his indifference; as she finished he stared from her to the package of letters, apprehensively.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

She did not reply, and he pulled at the knot that bound the package. It yielded after a moment; he unfolded the thick paper wrapping and found the letters within.

They were a collection of Julia's letters to him, written before his marriage. He had forgotten their existence. Now he recalled, in dim gropings, their loss. They had disappeared a few months after he had married the woman at his side.

He looked down at her with a startled gaze. She still met his eyes.

"Forgive me for keeping them so long," she said slowly. "I discovered them by accident and then knew how much you had been able to love someone else and make her love you. Then I understood why you would never have any love left for me. You had . . . given everything before . . ."

Kennell was still wordless, finding all speech without fitness for the astonishing necessities of these moments. But a genuine pity gathered into his eyes as he looked down at his wife, whose own eyes were now closed. His pity was almost impersonal, it not only embraced her but himself.

How impotent they had been to effect the fulfilment of their separate hopes! The essential triviality of those hopes did not matter. It seemed to him that an implacable irony, somehow vaguely personified, had cast them together into the intimacy of their long association that each might be the instrument of the other's disillusion.

He was about to speak, but observed that his wife was breathing quietly and he believed she had fallen then into an exhausted sleep.

From this, as it happened, she did not awaken. Her quiet breathing continued until nearly morning, when it ceased entirely.

IV

Two weeks later, in response to an inquiring letter, Kennell went to see Julia. His wife was dead; his old obligation was at an end, but now a new one had arisen. In a large measure he had refused to consider it. What were his feelings for Julia? What did she expect, what expectancy had he given her?

His mind, through some fundamental shrinking, had avoided the complex consideration that was necessary for evolving answers to these questions.

He went to see her, not, this time, with the old dullness and absence of definite emotion, the almost Oriental nirvana of the senses, from which her presence had given him a moment's emergence, but with a puzzled and uncertain heart.

He remembered his recent response in her nearness, and was a little surprised, although he was not sure that the second meeting would fail to arouse him in the same way.

In these perplexities of mind he was admitted once more to the house and waited for her again in the drawing-room. She came in presently and before their hands touched she spoke to him.

"Perhaps I sent for you before you were ready to come. I read of the death."

He shook his head.

"I intended to come," he said. "There were things I had to attend to, naturally. Everything is over now. I am free."

She approached him slowly, looking at him steadily, her lips unsmiling and curved with a subtle expression of reminiscent melancholy.

She held out her hands and he took them and they faced each other.

"I've been thinking of nothing but you and me since you were here last," she said. "I've thought about the old days and the present, and our . . . our adventure a few weeks ago."

She paused, as if confronting a difficult confession.

He found her face so obviously affectionate that a sudden fear aroused him to his necessity. His doubts were clarified like a turbid fluid into which is dropped a required solvent. He knew that he must not let her go on, compromise herself in spoken confession, reveal renascent dreams, for now he saw that he could not respond to them.

He cherished his memories of her, when he had been another man, for they were the things of his intimate history, the legends of another personality. Meanwhile, life had achieved in him a metempsychosis, and the old capacities for ardourous illusions were gone. Julia, the woman before him, he admired for the sake of the old emotions, she had granted him these, and he en-

joyed the recollections of them; this had been her rôle in his experiences and now she was no longer real.

He pressed her hands urgently, speaking rapidly.

"So have I," he said. "I've thought of all these things. It must have been something of our old selves that came back to us a few weeks ago and made us kiss as we did. I haven't been sorry for it, because it has made my recollections clearer. I have no reason to want to forget our former time together. Meanwhile, having seen you again, Julia, and had an intimate moment with you, I understand with perfect clearness how all my life here has passed away from me. In a few weeks I am leaving America to go back to my realities. Here I feel like a shadow; I have no place."

He was surprised to see that she was smiling; he had feared a different reception of his confession. She nodded her head, the touch of melancholy left her face, she seemed glad.

"I found that out myself when you kissed me," she said. "I was afraid to tell you then."

He understood; the recollection of her face expressing an enigmatic surprise, even a touch of consternation, came back to him—her expression as he had left her that afternoon a few weeks before. He felt grateful to her and full of a happy content, like a sick mind that has at last laid an old ghost.

Then again the appeal of her nearness possessed him and with an impulsive embrace he drew her close to him and kissed her.

"Dear, I'm going," he said, "and this is good-bye. I shan't forget anything of you, even this last kiss. Once I was able to make love to you and believe in my emotions with all the fervour of an artist creating a beautiful thing. Now it's a lost art. Do you understand? I am glad we were not deceived by our memories. Even now they seem so real as I hold you in my arms that if I could believe again that such a moment as this could last out the present hour, I'd never, never leave you!"

He released her from his embrace, breathed a good-bye, and turned then and walked out of the room and the house. On the street he walked briskly, like a man whose uncertainties have vanished for ever. He was content and glad that he recognized the definite end of ardent necessities. After all, this discovery was the great achievement of his homecoming.

Julia, left behind in her home, fought for a time with an impulse to run to the door and call him back. She vanquished this at last, and then she cried a little, and finally went up to her room, and thought regretfully of other days.

A WOMAN is never content to know that a man loves her. What she wants to be sure of is that loving her affects him like a broken leg, or cholera morbus, or tight shoes.

WHEN he is twenty, pretend to admire his looks. When he is thirty, pretend to admire his mind. When he is forty, feed him.

THE DANUBE UNDER THE MOON

By Helen Woljeska

The moon sees many things.
Tender, secret, throbbing things.
Feverish, plaintive, wraithlike things.
Bad and mad and foolish things . . .
Poor Moon.

* * * * *

IT was a white winter night.

The moon hung in the sky.

Below it Vienna glittered in luminous mists of greenish silver.

Brilliant lamps and flaming lanterns dotted the vision with gold and with red.

The moon looked in at the wide, illumined windows of an aristocratic house. It saw spacious rooms, luxurious furnishings, dazzling chandeliers, and masses of hot-house flowers—rich red roses, pale proud camelias, and hyacinths heavy with scent. And it saw many children, like larger hot-house flowers, exotic, delicate, and languid. Pompous footmen served Oriental sweets on golden trays. Dark-gowned governesses sat along the walls, sallow, serious, and severe. The sensuous rhythm of Strauss waltzes floated slowly through the air.

"Look at the moon—how beautiful!" Ludmilla stretched out her slender, bare arms. She herself had a moon-white face, with large, green, dreamful eyes, and short-cut bronze-coloured curls. She was excessively thin and fine, and wore a Parisian frock of lace, batiste and ribbons.

"Never mind the moon," drawled Alfred of the long, corn-coloured curls dangling over embroidered collar to the waist of his brown velvet suit.

"You are more beautiful," volunteered the other, elder one, proud of his Eton and white trousers.

The three had retired from the light and laughter of the room into the intimacy of the big window embrasure. Closing the heavy curtain behind them, they stood against its velvety darkness, glorified in the mysterious light of the moon. Three little, precious marionettes they seemed, playing their little comedy—for themselves more than for one another.

Ludmilla looked at her two admirers, her head thrown back, her eyes questioning.

Then she laughed.

"How silly you both are!"

She turned from them, pressed her warm white cheek against the window pane. "Go away—I want to be alone with my beautiful pale moon——"

"I will not go!" declared Alfred, heroically.

Then, resolved to save the situation with a thrill:

"Give me a kiss!" he demanded.

She shrugged her shoulders and did not vouchsafe an answer.

Zdenko, much relieved, laughed derisively.

"But she must!" Afred caught hold of her slender wrists.

A thrill of joy trembled through Ludmilla. But, grotesquely wise, she resisted, instinctively wishing to prolong the delight of knowing herself admired and having the power to refuse. Her head bent back, her eyes sparkling, she mocked him.

Zdenko grinned approval.

It was too much for Alfred.

He struggled determinedly, without further regard for romance or dainti-

ness, and forced her easily into his arms.

This time she was genuinely angered. His lack of ceremony chilled her, spoilt the whole mood.

"Let me go!" she cried, fiercely, "let me go!"

And her small clenched fist hit him squarely in the face.

He loosened his grip.

"All right," he said sullenly, "I don't care, anyway—"

He half turned away, glaring at her over his shoulder.

The elder boy, considering the incident closed, smiled sarcastically at the two disappointed ones, then, raising the heavy curtain, disappeared in the light-flooded room.

Ludmilla's heart sank.

She felt cold all of a sudden, deserted.

"Unless you come to me of your own free will—" Alfred, on second thought, added.

There was another silence.

Motionless the two stood in the pale, fantastic light of the moon.

Ludmilla's head was bent.

With nervous fingers she crumpled her silken sash. Curious, eager, she wanted the little episode to have its exquisite climax. Still—to do what he said was impossible.

"No—I cannot!" she cried at last, decidedly.

And with a swift cat-like movement she turned, to follow Zdenko, and leave the whole spoilt affair behind.

But he seized her, very quickly.

"You cannot—?" he asked—"why can you not?"

At once she shifted her ground. "It would be—a sin!" She revelled in the word so full of sinister charm.

Alfred smiled, a man-of-the-world smile.

"You will like it!" he promised.

But she shook her head.

"It would be a sin!" she reiterated.

"Why not commit a sin?" He said it thoughtfully, almost plaintively.

She looked up, struck by this note of sincerity.

His eyes were very close to hers, and in them she thought she discerned that mingling of sorrow and love which women older than herself have sometimes been unable to resist. . . . She lowered her lids. A glow spread over her cheeks. She felt the joy of the artist who realizes that his work is coming to a successful end!

Once more she glanced up, with velvety look.

"But how can I? The moon is looking . . ." she whispered mysteriously, shyly.

It was her last line of defence.

Just then the moon drew a cloud over herself . . .

Poor Moon.

WOMAN is the source from which every man draws according to his needs: the callow youth, madness; the adult, delight; the old man, reminiscence; the saint, beatitude; and the sinner, sin.

GOSSIP

By Frances Norville Chapman

I

"HAVE you seen the tapestry?" Kitty Bowers asked casually, as she handed Verrell his cup of tea.

Her manner was serene, but something in the watchful, anxious eye of the maid told him that serving afternoon tea was not an accustomed function in that household.

It amused Verrell and faintly depressed him. All of his boyhood friends seemed anxious to offer him the ceremonious hospitality to which they imagined his successful life in great cities had made him accustomed, when all he wanted was the simple little-town friendliness that for years he had carried in his heart as one of his most cherished memories.

The first shock had been to find that Baldwinsville was no longer the lazy Mississippi river town that he remembered. If it had not increased vastly in population, it had taken on all the physical aspects of a city; a union depot, street cars, taxis, paved streets, and the little wilderness of park that in his boyhood had formed a green heart in the centre of the village square, had given place to a fine Town Hall with a bit of lawn carefully roped off from the chance invader. He couldn't see much difference in the dress and manners of the young people of Baldwinsville from those of the young people of, say, Cincinnati or New York; if their sophistication was a little blatant and crudely expressed, it was perhaps because in Cincinnati or New York you took things more as a matter of course, the inevitable result of urban experience.

"It's a Gobelin . . . genuine," Mrs. Bowers' voice recalled him, and the note of, not pique, resentment nor reproach, but tinctured with all three, made him hasten to reply:

"No, but I'm invited to see it tomorrow. Isn't there a private view, a tea or something for the select few?"

"Now you're laughing at us," she coloured a little. "No doubt we are making a great to-do about it, but the tapestry is really the most important addition we have made to our little gallery, which I suppose seems rather funny and countrified to you, as it's just a wing thrown out from the library. But it's a start, and anyway, we think it's more educational to have it there; that is, the children will go there and er . . . well, use it more . . . look at the pictures and tapestry more than they would if it were in a building by itself. Of course, in time, we shall have a real art gallery, but we believe in growing slowly. Surely, in twenty-two years you find Baldwinsville changed?" she veered, and as Verrell agreed that Baldwinsville had indeed changed, he thought impatiently,

"Why are they all so sensitive and full of pretence?"

"Of course, travelling around as you have, living abroad and becoming famous," Kitty continued lightly, "our pictures may not strike you as anything very wonderful. Most of them are by modern painters or reproductions of old masters, but that tapestry is *genuine*. It is small, but the very best experts say that it is one of the finest examples of its kind," her voice was truculent.

"Can't I call for you in my car tomorrow?" she ended a little breathless and uncertain that she had not been rude to this coveted guest.

"Thanks, no, I'm dining with Steve Pindar. You know I haven't even seen Steve yet. He's called at the hotel and I've been to his office twice, but we've missed each other. However, I got him on the telephone this morning and we've arranged to meet and go to the gallery together."

"Steve Pindar!" she made a slight *moué*. "You didn't find *him* much changed, did you? With all his brains too. I've tried to be nice to him, invite him here and all that sort of thing, but he won't come. If anything he gets more impossible every year. But I will say that if I needed a friend, I know I could depend on Steve Pindar. He could have been a rich man if he'd taken half the opportunities that have been thrust upon him. He drew the plans for the library wing, and for the Town Hall. Lots of people didn't like it at first, thought it was too plain and old-fashioned, but after Steve got a fine offer to go with a firm of architects in St. Louis, they began to realize how well it fits into the landscape and the general character of the place."

Verrell laughed softly and Kitty joined him, but became instantly defensive: "However, that's true of any place, large or small, 'a prophet in his own country,' you know. You should have heard what he said about the tapestry," and Verrell realized that this was a subject not easily exhausted. "You know that funny way he's always had, indifferent about most of the things that *we* think important, and you never know whether he is laughing at you or not, but if you *ask* him anything and he thinks you really want to know, he'll tell you, or go to any amount of trouble to find out about it. Well, when the tapestry came he, for once, was enthusiastic. He advised us about hanging it and he goes there and studies it for hours. You wonder how he knows so much about such things when he hasn't been outside Baldwinsville a year, all told, in his whole life, except when he went to State University.

"You know the tapestry is ages old. I never could carry dates or figures in my head, but I have it all down in my Art Club notebook. It belonged to one of the kings of France, Louis . . . the . . . I can't remember, but the one who was so *awful*, mistresses and all that sort of thing," she looked at him with brave, daring eyes, as though flaunting her emancipation from traditional prudishness. "I can't for the life of me remember this minute whether it was Pompadour, Madam de Maintenon or Anne . . . no, she was English. . . . Well, anyway, the king gave the tapestry to one of his lady friends, and there was an awful row over getting it away from her.

"Steve Pindar said, in that dry way of his, that if the directors looked into the history of the tapestry, he was afraid they would send it to the basement to keep 'Huckleberry Finn' company, and then he went on with the drollest lot of nonsense you ever heard, telling what Huck would do and say to the little nymphs on the tapestry, some of it was hardly proper, but I laughed until I cried.

"You know," she went on, "I don't see anything immoral in 'Huckleberry Finn'; it is rough and coarse, and might put adventurous ideas into a boy's head, and perhaps it was just as well to take it off the shelves for general circulation although there was very little call for it. But now, when you can only get it by special application, there is such a demand for it that they've had to get extra copies," Kitty laughed wickedly.

"You know I really am rather awful myself. I'm not a bit immoral but I certainly am *un*moral," she smiled consciously, and Verrell recognized the catch phrase he had heard on the lips of no less than a dozen young or youngish women within the past week. Their emancipation was a little too obvious to be sincere, and he looked at Kitty Bowers curiously. She had been a distractingly pretty girl and at middle age she was still pretty, with all the promise of her youthful prettiness unfulfilled; nothing had been added, nothing remained but the well-preserved remnant of her youth.

"It seems to have a scandalous history, even for a tapestry," Verrell joked. "Aren't you afraid that, like Huckleberry Finn, it may arouse the spirit of adventure in some of your young people, or at least cause no end of gossip?"

"Now you *are* laughing at us. You see we live right here on the Mississippi, which makes Huckleberry Finn seem well, . . . too close . . ." her brow ruffled as the difficulty of expressing herself grew. "But a thing like the tapestry . . . well, it's too big. You can't gossip about a thing like that. . . . It's a thing complete in itself; it's . . . it's finished. . . . It is history. . . . Oh, dear, I can't say what I mean, I never could and you know it, Sid Verrell, specially when I try to talk high-brow."

Verrell joined her laughter as he rose to go, unaccountably cheered by her little burst of naturalness.

He wished the call were just beginning as he had wanted to ask about old friends, but Kitty had been so busy entertaining him that he had had no opportunity, but he beamed on her so genially and spoke with such warmth of seeing her to-morrow at the gallery, that after he left, her smile still lingered, and as she lay down to rest a little before dinner, she thought with satisfaction:

"Well, the tea and everything was quite a success."

II

"I HAD hoped to bring you up here to see this room before the mob got in," Steve Pindar said to Verrell as they mounted the library steps. "I put in more good licks of actual work on it than I did for the Town Hall and our seven story Masonic Temple, the two enduring monuments to the genius they all accord me, but declare I'm too lazy to exercise."

Steve seemed little changed from the tall, shambling boy who had been Verrell's most intimate boyhood friend. His clothes were good, but they were unpressed and looked as though they had been thrown at him; his thick hair rose in a shaggy mop over his high forehead, and his deep-set eyes had the same quizzical, ironical keenness that used to make Verrell squirm. Despite his generally rumpled appearance, there was something about him that made you feel that he would be at home in any company. It was his naturalness, his entire lack of pretence.

"You know this room has to serve a two-fold purpose," Steve explained, "for the dear ladies, our old friend Kitty Bowers in particular, will never be satisfied until they have what Kit calls 'a regular art gallery,' and in planning a wing to the library, I had to think of it as the ultimate home of books. Small as it is, I've put the best of myself into it."

There were not more than twenty-five or thirty people in the gallery when Verrell and Steve entered; most of them were engaged at the tea-table and for the moment their entrance was unnoticed.

It was a long, low room with perhaps half a hundred paintings distributed over the walls. Despite a sense of bare austerity, it was distinguished by the beauty of perfect proportions. It was a room prepared for a long life, there were no makeshifts, no restless, unrelated details; there was a rich intention of leisure and seclusion in the arrangement of the great fireplace, the long windows with deep embrasures and opaque shades on which the April sunshine threw suggestive, patterned outlines of branch and tree. At the end, opposite the fireplace, hung the beautiful old tapestry.

A glance convinced Verrell that Kitty had been correct in her classification of it as "a genuine." But he turned away, filled with the strangest rush of nostalgia for the futile, half-forgotten dreams of his youth, a realization of why Steve Pindar, with his great talent and fine perceptions, was willing to stay in this quiet, Middle Western town, hugging his spiritual isolation, far off from the terrific invasion of *things* that beset one in a great city.

"It's fine, Steve. It tells me a lot,"

he turned impulsively to his friend who stood with his hands thrust into the pockets of his shapeless coat.

"Thanks, I thought you'd get it," Steve's face lit with his charming infrequent smile, "but you came to look at the tapestry and to be petted and pampered, not to look at my room," and he nodded to the end wall where the tapestry hung. "It's a good 'un. The only real thing in the town, about the only thing worth looking at . . . with one exception," he added, as they strolled down the room.

"Who is that woman talking to Kitty Bowers?" Verrell demanded sharply.

"The exception," Steve replied drily, "surely you remember her."

III

She stood directly in front of the tapestry, her face turned a little in profile as she listened to Kitty, who, in contrast to the quiet composure of her listener, seemed to be shouting and gesticulating wildly.

She was tall and very slender, and her clothes, although in no sense to be termed fashionable, had a richness and distinction that made the other women look cheap and overdressed. She was perhaps forty-five or so, and yet her face bore no markings of age except an expression of enormous knowledge of life; certain experiences had given her an ultimate wisdom and life had no further secrets to reveal. There was no sparkle or brilliancy about her, everything seemed faded to a soft neutrality, like the blurred tones of the old tapestry behind her.

As Verrell turned wonderingly to his friend, Steve said swiftly:

"It's Meg Trowbridge, she married Harry Potter, he's dead.... Ah, they've spotted you . . . here they come, like the Greeks, bearing gifts," and instantly they were surrounded by a bevy of women offering tea, sandwiches, cakes, introductions, the tapestry, and over all, the insistent demand if he didn't find Baldwinsville changed.

Verrell remembered Meg Trowbridge as a tall reserved girl whom the other girls called "stuck up." Her parents had come from the East and they lived in a big white house a little way out from town overlooking the river.

While resenting an unacknowledged superiority in Meg Trowbridge there had always been a delightful sense of favour and distinction in her friendship. To be asked to spend a week-end with her put the stamp on a girl's niceness, for it was understood that Mrs. Trowbridge was particular and only "nice" girls were asked to stay with them. The boys liked to mention casually that they had been out to Trowbridges' for Sunday night supper, and as Verrell stole an occasional glance at her face it grew more familiar; he remembered that delicately poised smile on the finely drawn corners of her mouth, and presently, when he spoke with her, he recognized the charming inflection of her voice which he used to think was her greatest attraction.

She met him with all her old courteous graciousness, graciousness a little exaggerated now, as though an extra garment put on for protection.

"And Steve," she turned with a smile of affection to Pindar, who stood with his hands still in his pockets, as he had refused tea. "How natural it seems to see you two together again. When are you coming out to see me? I was going to write and suggest Sunday night for supper. I haven't grown up with Baldwinsville; I don't even possess such a thing as a tea-cart, so you'll get an old-fashioned hot supper. Do come, just we three. You know I still live in the old white house by the river, although the neighbourhood has gone down fearfully, my friends tell me."

Her voice was friendly, almost gay, but Verrell was acutely conscious of her faint, smiling plane of detachment. There was nothing condescending in her manner, and yet her friends approached her with the air of courting favour, he felt that they deferred to her, studied her, despaired of reproducing and yet constantly strove to imitate.

IV

"WHAT happened to Meg?" Verrell asked abruptly, as he and Steve sat before the fireplace after dinner.

"What do you mean . . . happened?"

"To change her so . . . To make her look like that."

"How does she look to you?" Steve asked with curiosity.

"I hardly know," Verrell replied, picking his words. "She isn't hard, she's almost too gentle; but there is something inflexible, something so aloof . . . so perfect . . . I can't express it. . . ."

"You've expressed it exactly," Steve replied. "I thought perhaps Kit Bowers might tell you about it when you were teaing with her, still Kit is a loyal soul. For a woman who talks all of the time and mostly like a fool, Kit hardly ever talks about people. When I don't have to be where she is, I have a real affection for her."

Steve paused for a long moment and then began slowly.

"You remember Meg Trowbridge was always a sort of princess to us kids. They were richer than most of us and I suspect better bred, certainly Meg was more carefully reared than the other girls around here. I don't think I was ever in love with her, and yet I've never been wholly out of love with her . . . There has never been anyone else. As a boy I found something intriguing about her. I used to think it was on account of her different bringing up, she dressed differently, she talked differently; you remember they used to go East every summer, and it seemed to me that she brought something to me that made Baldwinsville less of a spiritual desert where, in the rebellion of my youth, I used to think nothing human could take rootage at all. It used to puzzle me and flatter me a little too, when the boys and girls spoke of her as 'cold,' for I knew her to be full of fire and warmth and beautiful generosities, controlled by a fine reticence. We were always good friends, and I had her confidence . . . more than poor Harry or Harve Spence ever had it."

"Harve Spence?" Verrell's voice was incredulous. "I'd forgotten him. Didn't he sing or draw . . . what was it? . . . Of course, I remember, that beautiful tenor voice. . . . Did he ever do anything with it?"

"No, and he did draw, too, and he never did anything with that, either, although he had plenty of opportunities. He was about as worthless as a man could well be, and yet . . . she was mad about him."

"Not Meg?"

"Yes, Meg. It began long before anyone suspected it, even Harve himself, when she was a little girl and we used to go serenading. You remember we always made Harve sing the verses and we came in strong on the chorus." Verrell nodded, smiling slightly. "As we grew older half the girls in town were in love with his good-looking face, his beautiful voice, but it wasn't until you had been away from here two or three years that his name and Meg's began to be coupled, to the dismay of her parents, you may be sure. Harve wouldn't work, and he drank a little, his grandfather offered to send him abroad to study music or architecture, but he had no ambition. I remember how bitterly I used to envy him his opportunities. Finally the Trowbridges took Meg to California for the winter, and while they were away the Spences moved south, and of course Harve went with them.

"When Meg came back she seemed cured of her old infatuation, and within six months Harry Potter began dangling. That pleased everyone. Harry belonged to a good family, he was building up a good law practice, and he was frantically in love with Meg. I'll take that word back, it wasn't so much frantic desire, as a desperate earnestness in his regard for her.

"It used to trouble me, for, in spite of what I shall tell you, he was the squarest fellow I ever knew, and I think Meg almost loved him, and would have done so wholly if grandfather Spence hadn't died just then and left his money to Harve, who came back at this unlucky moment. He was better-looking and

more fascinating than ever, and his little fortune gave reasonable excuse for his continued idleness. He was generous, ever ready to help anyone in need or trouble, as tender as a woman, but too shiftless to do anything save lie around the hotel or go hunting. We had a little lodge down in Berrick's forest, half-way between here and Oldport."

"I remember," Verrell interrupted, "we used to go picknicking there."

"That's the place. Well, Harve spent half his time out there. When he couldn't get any of his own crowd, he'd take out a bunch of river toughs; I suspect they didn't do much hunting and wild tales, no doubt exaggerated, used to be told of their drinking and gambling. Meg knew all about it, you may be sure her friends let her know, although I don't suppose there was one of them who wouldn't have been glad to take a chance on Harve. His good looks, his amiability and his money made him a desirable catch in the eyes of most of the girls and some mothers, but the Trowbridges were distracted, and to this day I can't bear to think of Harry Potter's face during that time, although he never said a word to anyone.

"Of course Meg wasn't happy. She felt guilty about Harry, and Harve neglected and humiliated her in about every way a man could humiliate a proud girl, but she loved him through it all. He loved her too, I'll say that for him, and he suffered horribly when he had hurt her, but he always suffered too late.

"I used to talk to him, Meg asked me to, you can see how she humbled herself, but it always ended in his talking to me and convincing me that he was going to do better. Oh, I talked to them both. . . . I actually thought I could talk Meg out of her infatuation or shame Harve into leaving her alone, but," he laughed shortly, "you could no more have kept those two apart than you could have kept apart two chemicals that had suddenly evinced an affinity for one another. Of course the result was an explosion. . . . But I'm getting ahead of my story.

"Meg's parents were planning to take her to Europe for a year, when Harve suddenly proposed that they should go over to Dixon, the county-seat, and be married at once, to which she instantly agreed.

"To prevent suspicion, Harve was to go over on Sunday, ostensibly to look up titles on some of his deeds, and they agreed not to write or hold any communication with each other until they met in Dixon Tuesday morning, when they would be married.

"Well, Tuesday Meg waited all day long in that stuffy little hotel parlour and Harve never showed up. God knows what was in that girl's heart as she started for the train to take her back to Baldwinsville.

"As she left the hotel she met Harry Potter face to face. For a moment she was panic-stricken, she had a guilty feeling that he was hunting for her, then she instantly realized that he often had to be in Dixon on law business. He didn't ask her a single question, but as they started down the street, he told her that the train was an hour late and suggested that they go over and sit in the little park as it was pleasanter than the station or hotel. As they seated themselves, she turned to him desperately:

"'Harry, do you know anything about Harve?' she didn't care what he thought or suspected, and after a moment's silence, Harry replied: 'He's at the lodge, Meg.'

"'Did he go hunting? Do you *know* that he's there?'

"'Yes, he went hunting. He's been there since Sunday.'

"Meg blanched, and then whispered: 'Has he been drinking?'

"'I . . . I don't know, Meg. . . . I guess not. . . .' His reluctant reply only confirmed her suspicions. I don't know what else she asked him or told him. I don't know what they talked about, but they missed the train. They didn't take the train that night at all. They were married at eight o'clock in the Methodist parsonage and returned to Baldwinsville the next day.

"It came like a thunderclap, but the

Trowbridges were so relieved that they couldn't pretend much displeasure at the unconventional wedding.

"Harry took her to his home, where he and his father lived alone with a couple of nigger servants. I didn't see him but once before what I'm going to tell you happened, and then it seemed to me that he took his luck too seriously. I remember I chaffed him a little and was tactless enough to tell him that it didn't do to serve a woman kneeling, that they liked a little neglect and abuse. I could have bitten my tongue out when I saw him wince.

"The third day after their marriage was one of those cold, rainy days we sometimes have out here in October. Meg was sitting by the window when she saw Tobe Sawyer, one of the river toughs, standing at the gate making strange signs to attract her attention. She ran to the door, filled with a nameless dread, and called to him. He shuffled up the walk, his coat collar turned up and his hat pulled down over his face, an insufficient protection against that steady downpour.

"'It's Harve Spence,' he mumbled. 'He keeps yellin' for you.'

"'Where is he?' she screamed.

"'Out to the lodge in Berrick's forest. Been sick a week . . . crazy as a loon from the start. I came in las' Tuesday and tried to fin' you but the nigger up to your house tole me you'd gone out to spen' the day, so I tole a feller I met on the street and he said he'd fin' you. Harve kep' yellin' somethin' about meetin' you in Dixon, but he was ravin' about all kin's of things.'

"'Did you tell anybody else?' Meg asked, suddenly quiet. 'Have you had a doctor out to see him. Has he had proper food?'

"'No, I didn't see nobody else who knew Harve; I had to get back to 'um, and I couldn't wait to hunt up his frien's. My folks lives in Oldport, so I got a doctor over from there. Harve can't eat nothin'; the doctor says he's got pneumonia and is goin' to croak.'

"Occasionally it happens that a person once in his life does one thing after which everything that occurs is of no consequence. Meg went into the house, packed a basket of food and medicine, got her hat, coat, and umbrella, and without a word to anyone started for the lodge."

"She didn't walk to the forest?" Verrell interrupted.

"Yes, she did. She didn't even think of getting a rig from the stable. She was simply moved by a blind, unphrasable force that sent her forward.

"As she reached the open country the long icy spikes of rain seemed to point themselves at her slender figure and suddenly she found herself running. She had been to the lodge dozens of times, and she knew the way, but she lost herself repeatedly, tripping, stumbling through the mud and underbrush. She was half-blinded and soaked to the skin; her hands and clothing were torn, but she kept her basket safe and she ran . . . ran, tireless . . . one tremendous and masterful impulse drawing her on.

"At seven o'clock she stumbled into the lodge, water-soaked, her hat and umbrella lost and her teeth chattering with the cold. Tobe had left a fire on the hearth, and in one of the rude bunks Harve lay raving in delirium.

"She stayed a week. The disease reached a crisis the day after she got there, and Harve immediately began to mend. Inside of twenty-four hours everybody in town knew that Meg had run away from Harry and was staying at the lodge with Harve Spence. You can imagine how tongues wagged; but gradually the truth, or something like it, leaked out, and suddenly the most curious silence fell over the people of this place . . . the subject was avoided like the plague, but everybody knew that everybody else was thinking of it to the exclusion of everything else."

"What did Harry do?" Verrell demanded.

"He went out there immediately. He told me that when he opened the door Meg was feeding Harve. She didn't even lay down the spoon, just moved so Harve couldn't see him, and then she sat

and stared at him for what seemed an eternity, and he backed out without saying a word."

"And left her there?"

"What else could he do? None of the Trowbridges went near the lodge. Harry sent out a nurse, but Meg wouldn't let her stay. A few days later he came to my office and asked me to go out and see if there was anything I could do for them. It didn't strike me as funny or grotesque that he should make such a request. It was horrible. . . . I felt as though Harry Potter began to die at that moment.

"I went out and found Meg reading aloud to Harve, who was propped up in bed. We had all hoped he would die. I had come with bitterness in my heart towards Meg for the suffering and shame she had caused Harry and her family, but something in her face and Harve's groping, clinging hands, choked me and for a moment I could not speak.

"'Isn't it wonderful?' she greeted me gaily. 'He's almost well. In another week I'll be able to take him home.' I knew she had not told him a word about her marriage to Harry, and I simply couldn't think what their going back would mean to all of us.

"I stayed all night, but she wouldn't let me touch Harve, not even to lift him a little on the pillow. She told me that Tobe Sawyer had been with her most of the time and the doctor had come out from Oldport every day, but she had done all of the nursing herself. I dozed a little on one of the bunks, but every time I looked up she was bending over Harve or crouched down in front of the fire, waiting . . . waiting. Once I saw her smile strangely as she added a log to the blaze.

"The next morning Harve's temperature was normal and he declared he was going to sit up. Meg asked me to go to the neighbouring farmhouse for milk and eggs. I was gone perhaps half an hour, and when I came back Meg was standing outside the door.

"'Did you come in a buggy, Steve?' she called.

"'Yes.' I indicated the horse which was tied to a tree at the edge of the clearing.

"'Then we'll go back this morning.'

"I set the pail down with a splash. I hadn't counted on her asking this of me. 'But Harve isn't fit to move; he's better, but . . .'

"'Oh, no, Harve won't go. He's all right.' Her voice was tranquil, and her face, well . . . everything about her face had changed . . . . she looked just as she does now; she's never changed much since. Something made me begin to tremble. 'He isn't . . . ?' I stammered.

"'Yes, you were hardly out of sight when he asked me to lift him up, and when I laid him down he was gone.'

"'But we can't leave him. . . . I'll go . . .'

"'No, there's no need to stay now. We've done all we could for each other,' and with that cryptic sentence she went into the lodge for her things."

"Where did you take her?" Verrell asked.

"Home . . . that is, Harry's home. I started to turn into the river road, but she stopped me: 'I think I'd rather go *home*, if you don't mind, Steve,' she said softly, so I left her and went and told Harry.

"What happened?" Verrell asked.

"Nothing. She took up her life just where she had left it. Harry told me just before he died that they never even mentioned it between them. She never attempted any justification or explanation. She never seemed unhappy or even to be remembering. It was as though all of life's experiences had been crowded into that week at the lodge, and the world for her thereafter was peopled with a host of shadows. There has always been something unreal about her, and yet," Steve paused, musing, "she's the realest thing I've ever known. . . . Well, it killed Harry. He only lived three years."

V

THE two men sat silent for a time, then Verrell asked hesitatingly:

"Was Harry the chap Tobe Sawyer saw the day he came for Meg?"

"I don't know. They both confided in me pretty freely, but that's the one thing they neither of them ever told me . . . that and one other," and after a pause, "I've sometimes wondered which one of them first suggested their hasty marriage as they sat in the park that night in Dixon waiting for the train."

"And do you mean to tell me that Baldwinsville didn't gossip about a thing like that?" Verrell demanded.

"Well, it depends upon what you call gossip. I suppose they talked, but it never affected Meg's position, if that's what you mean. Gossip implies future complications, consequences; but this was a thing complete in itself . . . finished. You can't gossip about a thing like that. . . . It's too big."

"Kitty Bowers said something like that about the tapestry," Verrell smiled musingly.

"I like Kit; she's sometimes the wisest fool I know," said Steve.

SIC SEMPER

By John F. Lord

HE loved two women. May made no secret of her affection. She constantly showed him in every way she could that she loved him. June was different. She had the true woman's instinct. She pretended to be cold to him. She was indifferent to his manifestations of affection. He married May.

ONLY a fool takes two girls out to supper at the same time. Each will have not only her own unfavourable impression but also the unfavourable impression of the other.

RELIGION: Faith that there is one who rules our lives.
Marriage: Knowledge that there is one who rules our lives.

MARRIAGE is a romance in which the hero dies in the first chapter.

THE INTELLIGENT DECKHAND WHO SANK THE BOAT

By Joseph Bibb, Jr.

A DECKHAND who, though untutored, was a man of penetration and logic, found employment on a ferryboat plying upon a large bay. In the beginning he stood in awe of those who went to and fro, for he was come from afar.

"In truth," said he, "these must be persons of position for they have much leisure to spend thus in travel, and undoubtedly they are folk of rank, who have moreover attained wisdom, for they are absorbed some in converse, others in contemplation, so that they have no time for the humble nor for the affairs that occupy ordinary mortals."

As he went among them with broom and other tools of a mariner's trade—for to disturb the travellers upon every occasion was one of the duties imperatively laid upon him—he took opportunity, being desirous of self-improvement, to seek the lowermost secrets of their wise superiority. The diligence of his inquiry was such that he earned the commendation of his overseers for the inconvenience caused by his mop and dustcloth. And as his worth grew in the eyes of his masters, so within the speechless precincts of his mind did his amazement. For he was of an exceptional intelligence.

So unflagging were his studies that upon his four hundred and third voyage no thought of the passengers, neither in their speech nor their silence, was withheld from him, and at the six-hundred and eighty-ninth his spirit groaned, and at the nine hundredth he said in righteous anger, "What purpose serve they, thus making life a shuttle without a thread? Time is naught to them, else they would not spread it upon the waters, and they worship blindly a god who imposes the carrying of burdens at great weariness. Pish! If they were given a burden not to be set down they would the more rejoice and one for whom time is nothing would be the happier in eternity. Assuredly there are ferries that traverse for aye a certain dark river of which I have heard tell, and there might they all be at peace."

So, having a philosophy of action and being well versed in the structure of ships, he opened the seacocks with such cunning that the ferryboat sank in forty fathoms at the spot where the swiftest tide ran seaward. And all aboard were drowned, clinging to their bundles, save only the deckhand, who swam lustily to shore.

For there were still many other ferryboats.

THE ACCOMPANIST

By Floy Pascal Cowan

I

I COULDN'T say how or when Miss Wrenn came among us, and I doubt if any of the others could. She had possibly never made a conspicuous entrance in her life. But I believe she must have been there a long time before I became aware of her, for she gave me no sensation of novelty. She was just there! And I seemed to have vague reminiscent pictures of her going about the streets, always gliding along unobtrusively and very quickly as if no time must be lost. There were no high lights in those pictures, however.

She was a small dark little woman, and it was matter for quiet mirth to me that of all things her name should be Wrenn. "Any of numerous small singing birds." I smiled, my finger on the word in the dictionary. It just couldn't have happened! I played with the notion that she had assumed that name, seeing herself quite plainly.

We musicians were a queer assortment; some amateurs, some professionals, a few society folks, with the common bond of love for music.

We made public appearances at concerts from time to time, we played church organs, and sang in choirs and at funerals, and taught classes. But we talked high art when we met together, and were full of enthusiasms and hidden harmless vanities, and vague ambitions for our little talents.

Miss Wrenn played most of our accompaniments. She did it so well, and with evident contentment in the unassuming rôle.

We had got into the habit of meeting in our various studios or homes to talk and play, and one evening following directions, I climbed the four flights in a dingy old building to Miss Wrenn's abode, lugging my precious violoncello warily around sharp corners in the dim light. I heard a beginner's drumming on the piano before the door was opened to admit me.

"You teach late," I said when the pupil had gone.

"And early," she smiled.

"You are fortunate to have a large class!"

"Yes, indeed! It abridges other things, though, of course. One gets in queer habits. At noon while someone is doing a scale, I go behind the screen —that's my kitchenette!—and eat something out of a can, and get back before lower C is reached."

"Heavens! Aren't you dead by night?"

"Sometimes."

"When you are not, I suppose you go behind the screen and eat something else out of a can?"

She smiled, moving about in her noiseless way, straightening things up a bit.

"It would be droll if I got so I couldn't eat any other way, wouldn't it? I heard of a man once who always took his own cup and saucer in his pocket when he went out to dine."

"I can imagine the dullest dinner party brightening up if you produced a can opener and can," I laughed.

As the others began to come in I sat looking about me and wondering what she did with the money she earned.

It must have taken a very small sum

indeed to buy the plain, drab things she wore. And one could hardly say the studio was furnished. It merely had a few things in it. There was no satisfaction of temperamental longings, no gaiety of colour in the little workshop.

All that winter I had been going to the theatre—we had but one!—before my eyes happened one evening to fall upon the back of the pianist in the orchestra.

Instantly I knew it was Miss Wrenn. Again, reminiscent pictures convinced me she had been playing there a long time. I had looked at her but had not seen her. It happened that I was nearer front than usual, and at times could see her profile etched against the brilliant footlights as she followed the score or looked up now and then with a flash of amusement at the scene above her.

"The little wren is burning her candle at both ends," I thought between acts in a bored, vacant moment, and forgot it as the curtain went up again.

It was the following autumn that F. Hilliard Dale arrived in our city. And his was distinctly a conspicuous entrance. He came with a blare of trumpets, so to speak, heralded, awaited. Letters of introduction had preceded him. Press notices from far metropolitan places challenged our attention. We were on tip-toe with interest, and thrilled because our provincial community had been chosen as his home.

I saw him for the first time at a musicale given shortly after his arrival and in his honour. He appeared as the brilliant figure, featured, illuminated by his eager hostess. He was tall, not undistinguished looking, well poised, graceful.

My first and lasting impression was of a joyous, volatile being with a tremendous, clamorous ego. After some of us lesser lights had shone to our full capacity, there was a moment of intense expectancy in which we watched him approach the piano, with his violin. He was very deliberate, as if to give us the chance to perceive the charm of his personality before enthralling us with his art.

I came away with a more vivid sense of his personality than of his art.

One was forced to admire the adroitness by which a small talent had been lifted from utter obscurity. Had he been less avid of applause, less egotistical, he could not have borne to parade it so bravely in the limelight. I wondered about those press notices—

He took possession of a very expensive studio and furnished it luxuriously. There was something exotic in the rich mosaic effect of Persian rugs, and tapestries of colourful books and pictures. One felt that here temperament was enthroned, pampered. He charged big sums for his lessons, and those who could afford it went to him, with a sense of being honoured that revealed itself in the light of their eyes as they said:

"I'm taking from Hilliard Dale. He's frightfully expensive, but—"

You see, he was an excellent poseur. He was able to make people take him at his own high valuation. And, he understood the little vanities of human nature.

From the first he fell into our sociable ways, and his gaiety of spirit, his charm, and his intolerance of anything dull or dreary made us like to have him with us.

I caught little glimpses from time to time that winter of things that had gone into the making of Miss Wrenn's simple history. One evening I noticed a photograph of a young man on her piano. It interested me.

"That is my young brother," she said, coming to my side and looking at the picture, too. "Poor fellow! He is very frail."

"His face is most attractive, and—appealing."

"He has inherited a trouble that runs fitfully through our family. He's up in the mountains now—has been for some years—trying to get strong."

"Alone?"

"No—he married when just a boy."

"You take care of them?" I could not restrain the question.

"There's no one else for them to look to—poor children."

"I daresay you began taking care of people in your cradle."

"I think I must have fixed my own milk bottles." She answered my smile. "And made my own baby clothes. It was perhaps good for me—I don't know. My mother was always ill, and she died when this boy was born. I was eight then, and I remember as if it were yesterday burning my paper dolls and taking charge. I don't seem to have minded the work, but it puzzled and distressed me that there never was enough money.

"I can see my father's face now—leaving me of mornings—harassed and old—and telling me with a hurt, humiliated look in his eyes to 'put off the milkman,' or tell the grocer he would pay him next week. But next week he couldn't pay and there would be more putting off. And at times I would come across him sitting bent over a book that I learned was some mysterious thing connected with money or the shortage of money. A bank book! It seemed a terrible possession to me, for my father's face was always gloomy and disappointed as he looked into it and did endless figuring on a paper beside it.

"It got too much for him, I suppose, the worry and strain. There was one morning when he couldn't get up. I seemed to know then that he never would again. His face was gray—with a beaten look—

"I slipped out of the room and looked into my little purse. There were only a few pennies. They went into his trousers pockets—where there was nothing at all. The bank book was on a high shelf of the bookcase. I climbed up and got it down and sat puzzling over it, unable to think what its figures meant, and unable to think how I was going to get food and things we needed. When I went back to him he said:

"'Janet, you'll have to write to—cousin Hal—and tell him—I'm ill, and ask him to—loan us a little money.'

"I thought it would kill me to write that letter! I would write one word then take a look at his pitiful face to get the desperate courage for the next one. My cousin helped us, but a bit ungraciously, grudgingly. He had never tasted the bitterness of failure, or want. You know how intolerant such people are!'

"The sense of humiliation stayed with me. I made up my mind then that I would never have to ask anybody for money if I worked my fingers off."

She turned to her desk and picked up a little book, a faint smile on her lips.

"My bank book. It hasn't been much that I could lay by, but every cent that could be saved has gone into the little pile. My independence!"

My eyes swept the bare little room—understanding.

"You haven't had any fun, have you?" I asked.

"No—but I don't believe I expected any."

To me it seemed worse not to have expected fun than just not to have had it!

But I don't mean to picture her for you in pitiful colours. For she wasn't pitiful! There was a certain serenity—her face never wore a worried look. As near as I can express it she had the calm of one sitting at a window giving upon a familiar but not exciting scene.

"Well, life is like this," she seemed to be thinking. "What can one do about it?"

Can you see her now coming into the beautiful, softly lighted studio of Hilliard Dale with its rhythm of colour as surely sensuous as the lilting cadence of a melody of love? Sitting there at his big piano, the rose light falling upon her little, brown, emotionless face, playing his accompaniments? She played them very beautifully, sympathetically, never thrusting her part upon one's notice.

Well, Hilliard Dale never saw her. She was done in far too quiet colours

to catch his eye. But, he allowed no one else to play his accompaniments.

One evening we were in his studio, and he was standing in the centre of the room talking gaily. He looked particularly winning, with his light, soft hair waving back from his laughing face, and his slender, graceful body swaying with merry, mimic gestures.

Miss Wrenn was sitting at the piano, but facing us. My glance happened to fall upon her. She was looking at Dale.

For an instant the impassive expression lifted like a curtain, and I saw her spirit alight with emotion. Love and longing and a kind of rapture were there. Then the curtain fell. She turned to the piano, drawing her fingers softly across the keys.

"Poor little Jenny Wrenn!" I thought, with sharp pain in my heart. "Singing her song of love to the brilliant Cardinal who does not even know she exists!"

II

I AM not sure just when it was that I began to sense the progress of another drama, but I think it was about this time.

There was a very beautiful society woman, a Mrs. Snowden, who was with us a great deal. She had a voice of wonderful purity and sweetness and sang as naturally and simply as a bird, and with as evident and naïve delight in her own performance. Sometimes her husband, a dark, trim-looking, rather commonplace young man, would come with her. But he was plainly bored by music. So usually she came alone, and the big limousine waited. I had often to smile at the incongruity of that symbol of luxury standing in front of our humble doors.

It was something of a shock to me one evening as I came out into the night to see Hilliard Dale putting Mrs. Snowden into her car and getting in after her.

Yet, surely, I argued to myself, it was a harmless enough thing on the face of it. If it had been Evan, the harpist— pale and unmagnetic—would I have given it a thought?

Several times, later, I was aware of a rather furtive withdrawal of the two while we were still playing. . . .

One evening as I descended the long, winding steps in an old building from Yandel's sky-high studio, Dale's unmistakable soft, low laughter and a woman's delicious treble floated up to me. I may have quickened my pace. Who has not his little curiosity where the great game is being played?

Just as I came out of the door Dale and Mrs. Snowden had reached the car and were in the act of getting in.

I stepped back quickly into the shadow, for young Snowden jumped out of the car and helped his wife in.

The street lamp shone on his face, which was white and tense with anger as he looked at Dale—making no salutation whatever. Then he got in and slammed the door.

I shall never forget the sensation of horror with which, coming out into the moonlight one night with the gay insouciance of a Chopin waltz, someone had been playing, lifting our spirits, we found Dale lying on the pavement, still and limp. We thought him dead. I steadied a little figure that for an instant swayed against me, and looked down into Miss Wrenn's face, white as the one upon the pavement.

When Dale came to he made light of the jagged hole through his left lung.

"Always looking for a new opening!" he jested. "No right to complain of this one."

He had no idea who did the thing! Not the slightest!

It was not for me to tell what I knew. But I saw that tragedy, stark and grim and quick in the moonlight, as if I had witnessed it.

Dale came out of the hospital emaciated and with a queer baffled look I have sometimes seen in some winged creature of the air brought down with tragic swiftness from its gay flight, dumbly suffering a mortal hurt, and not understanding. In a way, with all his sophistication and his egotism that

shrewdly served itself, he was a joyous child of nature who drank from bubbling fountains as if by right.

He told us he was going away just for a little while. But we found, afterward, that he had sold his belongings.

I no doubt smiled cynically, a little later, when I learned that Mrs. Snowden had obtained a divorce and had also gone away.

Miss Wrenn went about her work as usual. But she seemed to have grown smaller and darker as the days passed, like a plant will when denied the sun.

We met together but fitfully for a while as it happened. Some few fortunates went away for a little study in New York, others were too busy to come.

One evening I climbed the long stairs to see Miss Wrenn and found her door locked and a note tacked on it saying she would be away for a few weeks. And I turned away sadly, for I knew the young brother must be worse. She did not return, however, even when the weeks had grown into months.

A year, perhaps, went by.

One day a telegram came to me from some place out West, saying that Dale had died that day and would be brought home for burial. It was signed, "Mrs. Hilliard Dale."

How strange that she should want to bring him back for burial! It argued something in her so insensitive as to be almost gross. For she must have known that we musicians, at least, knew how nearly scandal had come to touching her and Dale.

But a second telegram made me feel that it was his wishes she was carrying out. There were some of us he wanted to play certain beloved pieces; there were flowers particularly loved he wanted on his bier. How like him it was—pampering his ego, asking that the stage be perfectly set, the lights just so, for his last exit!

We were all down at the station when the train came in.

It was not Mrs. Snowden but little Janet Wrenn who stepped down to the platform. We looked at her utterly dumb with surprise.

She was the same quiet little body, looking almost shabby in an old black dress and hat, and a new but—even to masculine eye—cheap and skimpy black veil.

We wanted to pay for the funeral and the flowers and the trip. We were eager to help. But she would not hear of it. I caught that proud note of independence in her refusal. She assured us she had ample funds for all expenses.

We did our little best—playing the pieces he loved. And we sent flowers—not for the bier! She wanted to pay for those!—but to bank round the altar, and later cover the ground about his slim six feet of earth.

And then it was all over, and she went back to her teaching, and her swift glidings about the streets, and her playing in the orchestra.

III

By piecing together little bits I got something of the story, but not much.

Someone, returning after a long stay in the West, told me of coming across Dale by chance some months after his leaving us. He was living in great poverty and dying slowly of tuberculosis that had fastened like a devouring flame on the wounded lung and was licking its way.

He knew that he was doomed, it seems, when he went away. I suppose he had thought to die more quickly, and that what he had would suffice. He had paid his debts, which were large, and little had remained. But, as I say, he had thought to die more quickly.

I gathered that he had been bored beyond measure to be living so long, and humiliated over his helplessness. But he had stoically refused assistance.

Whether he finally sent for Miss Wrenn, or she found out about him and went because he was alone, and in want, and she loved him, will remain a mystery, for she laid a mantle of silence over those days by his side as irrevocable as the quiet sod above his grave.

I know that the bank account, built up with such labour, and infinitely hard denial of all her cravings for the beauty and light and gaiety of life—was wiped out.

But there is another thing that sometimes seems to me almost unbearable not to know. In those long months together did he learn to care for her? Not that he was worthy of her! But I wanted so to believe that her drab little existence had had the great kindling spark!

I do not know, however. Her face keeps that look of quiet serenity—of one who knows life, and does not expect too much.

THE MUMMY IN THE MUSEUM

By Ethel Talbot Scheffauer

LONG since they laid the jewels on thine eyes,
Wrapped thee in silks to be the queen of Death,
And burned the sacred oils, whose mystic breath
Heavy about thy golden body lies:
And all thy lovers, weeping and with sighs
Stood by the gates and called on Astoreth—
"Behold who comes, Queen of the world beneath,
Our lady Isis, beautiful and wise."

The desert winds have hidden Babylon,
The rose-red city is a grain of sand,
Blown up and down the desert without rest:
But thou art rearisen to the sun—
Nor shall thy worship wither from the land
Till the years eat the cities of the West.

SUCCESS in love implies the ability to repeat to the lady of to-day, with the same warmth, the same sentiments you repeated to the lady of yesterday.

THERE is no real difference between an optimist and a pessimist. The difference is between their wives.

THE FOOL AND THE BUTTERFLY

By Lawrence Vail

SHE sat there, across the sward, beneath the stooping murmurous acacia, Sonia, the never puzzled, ever poised woman creature who baffled him with her dexterous nonchalance. Her fingers busy at a work of threads and colours, now she frowned at Mrs. Ralston, her smooth, abundant mother; now laughed at a simple sally from her cousin, that Jack in tweeds with the vagueness of Western spaces in his eyes.

Conrad marvelled at two things: at his intense, irksome affection for her; at her utter unconcern in the face of his intense, irksome affection.

It was his choice pastime, in these moods, to enumerate her failings.

First, and deepest grievance, she showed no love for him, and it was not his custom to allow his vanity to be slashed more than once by those who lacked the temper to respond to his advances. A number of skirted figures flashed through his mind, all of them of sweeter charm and fairer, many more arrogant and unapproachable—witness Maud, Duchess of Streaton Rivers—who had made little show of dallying when he had invited them to be enamoured of him.

It pleased him to review them now, in the hour of his reverse: Philistra, that gorgeous, laughing ballad writer, a man in versatility of genius, a woman in depth of sorrow, fear of solitude, and thirst to give; Minnie Fullard, the little shop girl from Marsh and Snell, who had made parcel of her timid fears, her household goods, her drowsy past, her wistful future, her small economies, her immense trust, and laid them at his feet; Malona of the feverish whims and curious indolences; Kushla of the sombre, worried passion; even Chilu Chihi, a Belleville gutter snipe, who had risen to glory on a trapeze at the Folies Bergerettes, and considered her arms proof against any strain, her heart safe against both tender and money bribes.

After their fashion they had loved him, some timidly, regretfully, others with zest and brave abandon. Why did Sonia alone refuse the homage due to his skill and person? If only he could discover a flame of hatred in her, a flare of irritability. All she had to offer was her serene indifference, sometimes a graceful heartiness when a long nap or a new frock had made her glad of heart.

He watched her mingle words with her long cousin, turning on him, Conrad, so careless a profile, on her mother as indifferent a back.

True, if one considered her objectively, with no sentimental prejudice, she had no uncommon claim to loveliness. She moved her limbs in a manner not devoid of pretty rhythm, her skin was fair and clear, but larger women had smaller hands and feet, more daintily gloved and slippered. Her body, beneath her flimsy dress, offered a suggestion of curves too stolid and content: look at the mother and you could foretell the day when time would puff the daughter into a smug balloon of woman.

As in the case of Mrs. Ralston, the years would blow red upon her cheek; a decade would add one, if not two, chins. Her nose, it is true, amused you: it was tiny, boneless, retroussé, as though she must have been curious as a

child and stubbed the end of it against the shop windows of the quarter. Of the rosebud type, termed "cute" and "cunning," were her lips; the gap that formed the mouth seemed to have been cut perpendicularly instead of horizontally, and Conrad had always preferred lips that curved twice before they vanished into cheek. The vague listlessness of summer sky was in her eyes; they held none of the keener rapture of naked heaven seen through rips made by wind in stormy clouds. Her hair—of a pallid yellow without lustre: the longer Conrad gazed upon it, the more wistful did he grow for gayer gold, the gold of corn, of autumn noonday sun, the raw, cheap hue of dandelion.

Having thus summarily disposed of her physique, Conrad turned the batteries of his analysis against her brain, that live, mental stuff of her, quivering behind her white, immobile brow.

He demanded little philosophy in woman, no pedantic, mathematical intellect, but was she not lacking in the minimum requisites of wit, spontaneity, and fancy? She was ignorant—surely not a reproach when one considered the ruthless, tedious logic of the blue stockinged, but what made him rejoice with glad antagonism was the nature and expression of her ignorance. Disguised, transformed rather, into prejudice and obstinacy, condemning everything that came not within its narrow radius, this ignorance called itself common sense and thought itself the sum total of intelligence. No gasp of happy wonder shook it, no gust of fear or superstition. She could be annoyed, angry, shocked; she could never be astonished.

The artist in Conrad rebelled at the ill-usage of so much fair material. How alluring it might have been—this ignorance of Sonia, if she had handled it with skill, rather not handled it at all, but allowed it to run its fairy, headlong course, to drift like bubbles in the summer wind. On the other hand, the man in Conrad could not help but rejoice that she had concealed it behind so much neat practicability. It would have been more arduous, otherwise, to disengage himself from her.

A glad exultation swept through Conrad. He felt strong, free, detached. He took a new joy in the external world. He felt that he could look at Sonia, talk to Sonia, with no personal emotion. A doll she was, prettily pretending to be woman. Thus he should treat her, like a doll; pretend, now and then, to believe in the woman in her. At this instant he would go to her, mingle in the conversation, volley words of trivial purpose, demonstrate that intellect and logic had conquered his whim and instinct.

He saw her, as he crossed the lawn of green towards her, lay the work of threads and needles on her convenient mother's lap. He heard her, with a decisive, abrupt word, interrupt her cousin in the middle of a rambling anecdote. It was as though she had acquired knowledge of Conrad's resolution, as though she felt that damage had been done to her in his mind—damage which must be immediately repaired.

There was the dancing laughter of her teeth, a hint of promise, provocation in her eyes, bidding him cast from him solemn thought, to be simple, to adore her. And Conrad felt his edifice of careful logic departing from him, crumbling, tottering within him. The measure, melody of the part he had been so long rehearsing had fled at one touch of concrete life. He knew that nothing could make him disobey her, that his heavy, reasonable resolution had no reality, that he was going to be simple, very simple, and adore her.

He heard her ask him in a playful voice pretending to be anxious for what reason he had been sulking.

Sulking! No—he never sulked. He had been thinking—foolish thoughts. Would she walk with him in the forest?

The languor of summer afternoon was in her. She did not want to walk, but she felt that something in him hoped she would refuse, that, to hold him, she must defeat this thing. It would be prudent, at this hour, to make one con-

cession to his humour; later, when she would be sure of him again, she could venture to be coquettish. So, with the divination of the moment, she coaxed a look of vanquished abandon into her eyes, parted her lips as though she were the willing prey of some sweet pain, told him to be patient while she ran upstairs to get her hat.

Conrad watched her disappear into the house. He breathed relief the instant a solid wall cut her moving image from him.

At the same time there rose in him a sullen, impotent rage. What a weak clown he was! At the hour of his strength, when he felt convinced of his power to disentangle himself from her, she had won him back by a woman's ruse, a trick of teeth and eyes and lash.

What was this power which she had —this flimsy, trivial woman creature? What was this magic vapour emanating from her which made him weak and miserable, so often weak and very happy? There was only one way, perhaps, of freeing himself from her. He should take her to some desert place, far from the curious world, and do wild damage to her. There, alone with her, where he would see no other living creature, he might well come to hate her.

He knew, however, that he was too civilized and slack of blood to act in this pirate fashion. He would wait quietly while she prinked and put on her hat. And later, in the forest, he would indulgently term himself a sorry clown, while she simpered casual nothings in his ear.

OBLATION

By George O'Neil

MY singing of your loveliness is done.
I have told all it means and told again
The way its ardour, splendid as the sun,
Makes all my soul a solitude of pain.

What can I say I have not said before
But that the nearness of your face last night
Adds to the chalice of my thoughts one more
Treasure of suffering and sharp delight?

Could I become more lyrical to-day
For some new shadow in a word you spoke?
For some dear gesture or a startling way
Familiar beauty in your glance awoke?

Though every hour I should have joy to claim,
Though every hour another song has died,
My heart shall burn with their imperfect flame
And I shall go in silence at your side.

AND MINSTRELS FLOWN WITH PRIDE

By John McClure

THE proud Semiramis in hell
Is not so full of pride as we
Whose heads are giddy with old rhyme
And echoes of lost minstrelsy.

Though she remember Babylon
And Babylon's bewitching sin,
Her memories are not so rich
As those of rhyming gentlemen.

Drowsy with ancient dreams we sit,
Giddy with old forgotten airs,
More gorgeous than her pageantry
And sweeter than her dulcimers.

PEACE

By Marvin Luter Hill

LOVER, I am tired now, and the end is near;
They bring me ghostly bread and wine but I only hear
The happy wind, the April wind, go singing in the mere.

Lover, I have peace now, the peace of Paradise;
They comfort me with holy things—the saintly ones and wise—
But oh, to see the love again in your gray eyes.

THE ESCAPE

By Van Vechten Hostetter

I

JOHN MORDANT was born in a city not far from the centre of the United States—a provincial metropolis that boasted—literally—more lofty buildings and big department stores, more brilliantly lighted and paved streets, more churches and trolley cars and more riches than Wilmington, Delaware, although it was not so large as Wilmington by some eighty thousand souls.

The city also possessed more hypocrisy, snobbery, and sordidness than Wilmington and the whole of the Atlantic seaboard. But it bragged loudly of honesty, open-heartedness, broad-mindedness, and democracy, always with the adjective "Western" prefixed, as if it were really Western, and as if those qualities were the exclusive property of the West.

John Mordant's parents were worthy and rather dull. In another community they would have been regarded as valuable if not important members: here, having little money, they were absolute nobodies. They had, however, transmitted to their son blood that rose against his mean environment and was strong enough to carry him out of it.

John Mordant began to despise the city as soon as he began to understand it, which was about the time he entered high school. At eighteen he loathed it, and only Mary Burgess made it tolerable. He loved her. She knew the city for what it was and loathed it almost as much as he. She would have loathed it just as much if her own feeling had not been influenced and somewhat modified by that of her mother and those of her brothers. They loved the city and helped it brag. They, too, were nobodies; but they had hopes of being rich and of being somebodies some day.

When John Mordant completed his law course—he was twenty-four—he begged his parents to go away with him, but it was too late. His father, who had never had much courage, had none now.

"I've a very good position and I'm sure of it," he said. "It would be very foolish to strike out for something new at my age."

John, with his five hundred dollars of savings in his pocket, went to Mary Burgess and told her he was going East—somewhere East—to practise his profession, to meet real people, to live and breathe, to grow.

He asked her to go with him. He knew she wanted to go, but she said:

"Not just yet. Mother thinks I'm too young. I know I'm not, of course—but she thinks so—and she needs me—for a while. Walter and Carl"—those were Mary's brothers—"are just beginning to get ahead with their automobile agency, you know, and they need all their money. If I didn't help them in the office they'd have to hire some one."

John broke in, protesting.

"Why is that your responsibility? Their getting ahead is their business. What about the fellows that haven't got sisters? Why must you order your life for them and go on sacrificing, sacrificing, just as you have been for years, for them? They don't do it for you!"

Mary smiled heroically, resignedly.

"I know. It isn't right, but I've got to stay here. They would never forgive me. John, I can't just break away from them. I would for you if I could, but I'd never be happy, and so I couldn't make you happy. I've talked with them.

They won't give in, so I've got to. In a year or two . . . You can wait. . . . I know you will. It won't be long. The time will pass before you realize it."

John pleaded no more. He knew Mary's mother and knew her brothers. He knew how the selfish and unscrupulous have ever made consanguinity serve them in imposing on and cheating the generous and weak. Mary's mother and her brothers grudgingly admitted he was a "good enough" young man so far as mere morals went; but they had not concealed, had not had the wisdom or the decency to try to conceal from him that they considered him undesirable as a husband for Mary.

He knew that if he had had even as much as fifty thousand dollars they would have rushed Mary to the altar with him—by force almost if necessary—lest he change his mind. He knew that Mary with her dark beauty was to them an asset. He knew they were severely displeased with her and called her silly for refusing to encourage the "rich society men"—society men because they were rich—who occasionally happened into the office and smiled at her. They might have asked to call.

Knowing what he did, John knew pleading was hopeless. He had faith in Mary. His soul was choking in this sordid atmosphere. He must save himself. He would wait for her and come back for her. So he went away.

Within a year John's parents died—as they had wanted to die, together. He went back to bury them, wondering if he would have had the strength of will to do so without the compensation of seeing Mary.

A reporter for *The Trumpet* met him and asked if it wasn't good to be "back home."

"That is a rather odd question to ask a man who has just lost his only relatives in the world," he answered—a rebuke that was unappreciated. "It wouldn't seem good to be anywhere."

The Trumpet published a purported verbatim interview—more or less grammatical—lauding the city and intensifying the laudation by disparaging the East. That was *The Trumpet's* policy. The readers loved such stuff. The city had no use for its poor citizens while they remained at home or when they went to "the coast" (meaning the Pacific coast); but when they went East it was always sure they carried its surpassing virtues there to compel recognition and admiration.

John Mordant, hating the place on its own account and because he felt that somehow it was responsible for the meanness in Mary's mother and brothers that had cost Mary so much, would have liked to say what he thought—which was:

"I see the town is a little bigger and more contemptible than ever. I see the first family in your so-called society is still the richest one. Its foundation was laid by lending trifling sums to struggling land-owners and foreclosing mortgages on their widows when they died. I see you still know no measure for anybody's worth but money. I see that your society elects to its clubs stock-brokers, shop-keepers, and all who scramble for money and get it; while it excludes men who are composing music and painting pictures and haven't money. I see that even your patriotism is tainted with love of money. I see your rich enjoy your poor more than any other rich I know. They love to talk about their poor. It's such a wonderful way to emphasize their richness and their superiority."

After the funeral John renewed his appeal to Mary Burgess.

He had not set the world on fire, he told her, but he was making headway. He had some interesting and worthwhile friends. Several were musicians. One was a painter. Some others wrote. The man with whom he had been fortunate enough to become associated in practice was something of a leader in civic affairs. Some of John's friends were promising young lawyers. One of his clients frequently invited him to symphony concerts and the opera.

"Just a little while longer," Mary said. "Oh, I want to go back with you

—I do want to go—but I can't. I just can't."

"No," he said bitterly, "of course you can't. You've waited long enough. I've waited long enough. You have your life to live, but you can't live it because other people won't let you. Oh, justice! O Mother-love! Good God! What hypocrisy! What—"

She stopped him, begging.

"Dearest, I can't help it. Don't go on that way. It's hard enough for me . . . hard enough for both of us. Don't —please—make it any harder."

So he went away again.

II

JOHN MORDANT struggled to rise in the world he had found. He had qualities that made him friends and he strove to deserve their friendship more and more. He had wit. He had brains and talent. They were recognized. The men he met seemed glad to help him. He was one of the most popular members of a little group that liked to talk of letters and the arts, of politics and ethics—of almost everything but the thing Mordant had come to hate to hear mentioned because it was discussed so to the exclusion of all else—the mere making of money. They called him affectionately "Big Blond John."

Yet Mordant was never happy. His heart was hungry with a hunger that only Mary Burgess could satisfy. He never was among friends enough to dispel his feeling of loneliness and incompleteness. Often all his strength was required to be companionable, interesting, and brilliant, and he would go to his rooms exhausted—but not to sleep; only to lie down in a torture of melancholy, cursing life for its cruelty. Once he wrote to Mary:

"I want you. I need you. You are part of me. I am part of you. You need me. There is life here and I want you to have it. There is inspiration. You deserve it. But that's secondary, after all. The great thing is that we belong to each other. How long must we go on living out our lives for other people? When can we begin living them for ourselves?"

The answer was:

"Go on being brave and strong. It's hard for me, too. I'm always with you in spirit. We will be all the happier for having waited so long for our happiness."

But John's spirit cried out more and more bitterly. Every lost day was like a lost year—like a year of life for both of them, full, rich, and sweet, lost irretrievably.

When his heart hunger had driven him to the mad desperation of a man whose body has starved too long he went back for Mary. Her year or two had grown to three, and four, and five. She was still beautiful, but in her eyes and the lines drawn around them he saw what bitter pain she had suffered in those years of self-abnegation. In his pity he forgot the torture that had put deep lines in his own face and rounded his big shoulders.

He stood before Mary's mother and her brothers, a man resolute and grim, come to claim his own and fight for it. They were hostile, but their courage failed at the sight of him. Mary had remained silly, but they had never ceased to hope until now.

"I've come for my girl," John said. "I'm going away again to-morrow, and I'm not going without her. She's going with me whether you like it or not."

He did not raise his voice nor shake his fists, but there was steel in his words. "You ought to like it. It will be better for Mary and all of us if you do. I'm ready to fight you all with my hands and take her away bodily if I have to."

Mary's brothers sat and stared inanely. They lacked even the courage to show resentment. John was filled with contempt for them and reproach for himself for having waited so long to do this thing. It was so easy to do, and he should have realized long ago that it must be done.

Mrs. Burgess answered in the manner of a martyr—with that magnificent hypocrisy with which women and effeminate men deceive even themselves.

"I'm sure Mary has always been free to marry you. I know I have never tried to hinder her."

John held his lips firm to conceal his scorn.

"Then don't try to hinder her now," he said. "When I come back to this house in the morning I want to come for a happy girl. I don't want to take her away miserable because you're not reconciled. But I'm going to take her, miserable or not."

III

JOHN MORDANT had blessed the fifteen hundred miles he had placed between them and the despised city. He and Mary had escaped, he had thought, and those miles insured their freedom. But he had not considered the mails. He had not realized how well they could serve the purpose of the mischief-maker. Nor had he realized that Mary might not have wholly escaped the taint of her mean environment.

Mary met John's friends, and they liked her—liked her for her beauty and her wit. She was overwhelmed by their intellect and genius. (It was the only intellect and genius she had known.) She described them in long, dutiful letters to her mother.

Mrs. Burgess was very glad her daughter was finding such interesting friends. She did not neglect, however, to say it was a pity John did not know more "big business men." It was nice to know the others, who were, of course, quite worth while in their way, but "it's getting in with the big business men that puts you ahead."

Mary, without mentioning her mother, suggested this to John.

"It all depends on what you consider getting ahead," he said. "Making money is not specially 'getting ahead' here, you know. Of course, we want all we can get without sacrificing the bigger and finer things than money. We're doing very well, I think. I have some very good clients."

"Of course," Mary said, "money isn't everything."

"It's very far from being everything," John said. "We have friends that are of the finest people in this town, and so regarded, and have less money than we."

"Yes," said Mary, "but it's not being poor that makes them fine."

"No, certainly not," he said, giving her her last word.

One night Mary read of the latest sensational case of a great criminal lawyer. He was defending some mail fraud syndicate.

"My, he must make piles of money!" she exclaimed. "Why don't you get cases like that, John?"

He answered, a little irritated because she had to ask:

"They tried to employ Mr. Wharton and me. We don't want that kind of business."

Once when he had told her with enthusiastic admiration how Henry Corlear had refused a commission to paint a magazine advertisement for a soap concern she laughed.

"How foolish," she said. "Can't he see their money is as good as anyone's?"

John threw up his hands in irritation.

"Good heavens," he cried, "can't you see he's a gentleman? Can't you *see* why he refused? If you can't I can't tell you!"

"I've heard he owes everybody," Mary flashed. "I'd rather paint soap advertisements than be in debt."

"Well, that's where you're different from many others," said John. "The people he owes money to admire him for what he is, for his genius and his ideals. They'd rather lend him money and never get it back than have him paint soap advertisements. That's how much *they* think of money!"

"They can think as they please," said Mary. "I think it is a very fine thing."

John jumped up from his chair, throwing down his newspaper, and glared at her.

"Good God, then, why didn't you stay out among the money worshippers?"

"Because I didn't worship it," she said defiantly. "I don't worship it now."

"Yes you do. You think money, money, money!"

"I think nothing of the sort. Neither do I think against it all the time—neither do I hold it in contempt, and consider it a virtue not to have any and to be in debt. You told me these were real people, and they're no more real than the others I grew up with. I wish there *were* some real ones—just ordinary decent people, just people that weren't crazy about money and weren't crazy with egotism and self-admiration. I haven't seen any like that and I wish I could!"

John's lips moved as if he were about to speak. Then he threw up his hands in a gesture of hopelessness and turned away.

Mary did not find the people she wanted to see. She began to doubt their existence. She came to feel for John's associates with their perpetual intellectualism, idealism, and super-sensitiveness a disgust little less deep than that she had felt for the money chasers at home. Their constant cleverness, constant exhibition of profundity and constant display of lofty virtues made her doubt their sincerity. They were too ponderously serious to be real. She wondered if they did not sometimes lock themselves in their rooms and read popular novels and poems that rhymed. She wondered if they did not slip away to New York and see the "Follies" and the shows at the Winter Garden.

Driven by her love of John and her sense of duty, Mary simulated sympathy with John's friends and joy in their association. It taxed her nerves and her strength. Often after an evening of unusually rare intellectual fare she went to bed in utter collapse.

It was after one such evening that John took her to task for indifference that she had not had the strength wholly to conceal.

"I can't help it," she said wearily. "They tire me to death. I don't like them. I don't think they really amount to much. It's too much work to listen to them. It may be fun for them, but it's work for me—the hardest work I ever did."

John's face grew dark and hard.

"Very well," he said. "I'm sorry I can't give you the kind of people you like. Of course, my friends aren't worth while. They haven't got their minds set on getting rich, like the dear people back home," he sneered. "I see you like that money-grubbing crowd."

"No, I don't like them, but I don't want them to be able to look down on us because we have nothing. I want to be able to hold my head up. They'll know how we get along. It'll get back to them somehow. I want them to know we're succeeding."

"Yes," he said with bitter contempt, "you want to live here, but according to their ideals. You insist on letting them set our standards for us. They say success is making money—so we've got to make money. Well, you can have your ideas. I won't trouble you any more; neither will my friends. I can go back to my old rooms. I'll send you money enough for your needs, but I'm afraid not enough to let you hold up your head."

So he left her. He was gone a month, a miserable month for him and Mary, a month of bitter self-reproach struggling with stubborn pride.

John despised himself as he had never before in his life despised anyone. Yet he strove to convince himself that he was a man abused by Fate or God, a man betrayed and defrauded.

Making the conventional excuses for Mary's retirement, he sought relief in the associations of the friends he had thought worth defending against his wife. The relief was not to be found. The associations, instead of healing his sickness of soul, aggravated it.

He began to admit in his heart that Mary had not been wholly wrong. Some of these men were, after all, rather artificial fellows. They lived comfortably, ate and drank heartily, and did not bear any severe hardships for the sake of their principles.

Suspicion presently became convic-

tion that their æstheticism and their altruism were not quite genuine, that their intellectuality would not stand too deep scratching. Still, they were far more worth while than average men, too much worth while to throw away. He valued them, valued their good will and admiration and respect. That good will and admiration and respect he was afraid to lose. He would have liked to divorce himself from these men whose associations had failed him in the first real test, but he was afraid—afraid of what they would think and say.

Meantime Mary brooded at home alone. She condemned herself bitterly for her refusal to adapt herself, to sympathize with the one person who had lived and struggled and starved his heart for her, to help him realize his hopes and dreams. For her sake he had suffered himself to be cheated and robbed of years of happiness and for reward she in her selfishness had cheated and robbed him more.

Mary was the one to surrender. She begged him to forgive, begged him to grant "another chance to be the wife I ought to be." And he forgave, confessing his own guilt.

"I don't blame you for feeling as you did," he said. "I can't expect you always to like the people I like: but try to like them as much as you can. I won't ask you to see any more of them than is necessary, but we just can't quit them. We can't afford to."

"I know we can't," Mary said wearily, "but if we only could."

"We've got to go ahead and make the best of it," John said. "All life is politics. You've got to make people like you and you've got to be the kind of person they want you to be or they won't like you."

"Yes," Mary said, "we can't just ignore them. We've got to be liked to make even a living. We'll just see as little of them as we can."

They saw as much of them as ever, for as John was afraid to lose all their interest, so he was afraid to lose a part of it.

IV

MARY'S mother meantime continued to preach the gospel of money. She had preached it effectively enough through all the years her daughter was at her side and she had no intention of changing her policy now, even though Mary, at John's suggestion, had intimated that the financial homilies were unnecessary and unappreciated. Almost as she had learned her letters Mary had learned that money was the thing of all things most desirable. It was power. It brought all blessings. It was protection against evil. Without it one must always fear calamity. With it nothing could hold terror. Whenever a girl that Mrs. Burgess knew had married she had speculated on the financial status and prospects of the husband. This or that girl "did well." The other could have "done better."

Mary's mother's letters were full of uneasiness for Mary. What would become of her if John should die? What would become of both of them if John's health should fail? If some accident should make him a life-long invalid how could they pay doctor's bills? Of course, they would live some way, she said, but what would people think if Mary's brothers should have to support them?

Mrs. Burgess wondered what would become of herself if she should lose her sons. How could John care for her? What a humiliation it would be for her to ask her friends to "take her in!" She had a thousand fears, and all of them she put in Mary's heart.

Those fears Mary could not hide from John. Finally she gave up trying.

"For heaven's sake, my girl," he said, "quit this silly worrying. Look at me."

His voice rose.

"I'm not an invalid—not now, but I will be if you don't stop your worrying, because that makes me worry. I can't have any peace while you're not at peace. Why, why," he cried, "can't we be left alone? Why will your mother insist on filling up your mind with terror—terror—terror all the time! My

God, it's such a simple thing to let other people live in peace, why will nobody do it? Listen. I've got ten thousand dollars and more—already—to say nothing of my life insurance. You're absolutely safe. And even if I died and left you nothing, we have good friends—right here—who would never see you in want. And it's no disgrace here to let your friends share their better fortune with you. That's part of a friend's business. The whole philosophy of life is different here, and if it weren't, can't you see that we're still safe?"

Mary, reassured for the moment, said she saw and really believed she did. She passed the assurance back to her mother.

Mrs. Burgess did not overlook the fact that John had "a lot more than ten thousand dollars already." (Mary had put it in that optimistic way to strengthen the reassurance and to inspire in her mother some respect for John. Being her daughter, she did not quite understand her mother.) It was not long before a request for help from Mary came. Her brothers were doing well, Mrs. Burgess said, but they were hampered by lack of capital. A few thousands, if John and Mary could spare them for a year or two—and surely they could, since John was "doing so well"—would be a wonderful blessing—a godsend.

John and Mary spared them and a year later "the boys" failed. Mary told John when he came home one night and found her in tears.

"They've nothing now," she sobbed, "and the money we gave them is gone."

John laughed cynically.

"Don't cry," he said uncomfortingly. "I'm not surprised. It doesn't matter. I always considered it a gift—a donation. I knew no matter what became of it we'd never see it again. They just worked you—and I let them work you to keep from hurting you."

The words cut into her heart like a hot knife. There was anguish in her voice when she cried out:

"John, you've no right to say that. You know it isn't true. You know my brothers are honest—and my mother. You know they're just as honest as you are—just as fine—just as good."

He sneered, "Fine and good enough to rob their sister—rob her of money—rob her of life—rob her of happiness. Fine and good enough to keep her working for them—working at what they could hire done for fifteen dollars a week—working when they knew she was miserable and her heart was starving to death!"

Mary rushed at him in a rage of resentment and struck him in the face. He would not touch her, but stood there with his arms at his sides while she struck him again and again. He tried only to reproach her with his eyes; but it was a feeble effort, for already he was beginning to feel himself deserving of the punishment.

"Leave me!" she cried at last when her strength was spent. "I never want to see you again. I hate you. Love! What do you know about it—or about justice—or honour—or pity. Money! You pretend to despise it, and still you love it enough to quarrel about it and insult the wife that gave you her very life. Go away. I'll live. I'll work. I can. I've done it before. It'll be easy after what I've gone through these last years. And I'll pay you back every penny."

Her voice seemed to tremble with loathing.

"Oh, I'll pay you back!"

He went out and away from the house with the heart of a man sentenced to death.

V

JOHN MORDANT sent word to the office that his nerves had failed and he must rest. He went back to the old rooms he had had before his marriage and once since. It was the tomb of a living dead man, a dead man living in a hell of which Dante never dreamed.

To Mary he sent letters of self-abasement, letters damning himself, begging forgiveness, craving the privilege of serving her, of being in her presence, even if he might not see her face. There came no answers. He sent money. His

cheques were not presented for payment. He sent men to see if Mary was still in the house. They came back and said she was and that was all.

At last, weak from sleeplessness and fasting, John Mordant went home. He let himself in and searched through the house. He found her sitting by the window in her room. She was looking out into the dusk and did not seem to have heard him.

He spoke her name softly. She did not start nor turn nor answer.

"Mary," he said, "I love you."

She did not move nor answer.

"I may never have loved you before," he said, his body shaking, "but I love you now."

She rose slowly and turned toward him.

He opened his arms and held them out to her and she stumbled into them.

He bent over her and kissed her hair.

"Dearest," he said, "I love only you. There's nothing in the world I love but you. I want only to love you—hold you in my arms—caress you—live with you—live with you—be one with you in body and soul. I'll give the world for you — friends — ambition — glory. I'll leave them all for you. I want to leave them all. Everything—every soul I know I want to leave—abandon—so I can give all and be all to you."

She whispered, "I love you just that way."

He strained her closer to his heart, crushing her.

"Let's go away," he said, "where I can work with my hands and we can live for ourselves. We can't live here. It's hopeless. We can't go on always compromising, always conceding, always fearing—the both of us—for what people will say or do or think—always doing one thing to please somebody and something else to suit somebody else—never free to live and love each other. Oh, love can't compromise—when it's love. Let's go—now—to-night—to the ends of the earth—Australia—Africa—anywhere—some island thousands of miles away—thousands of miles from this money hell—where not even a ship comes—anywhere, only away—away so far it will be like going out of the world—where no one can ever see or hear of us again.

And she answered with a great sigh, "I'm ready to go."

ASK a woman to choose between going to Mrs. Astor's reception with another woman and going to a dance in a hall over a livery-stable with a man, and—but why waste time?

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Mary Pitcairn

It has become the whim of the smart woman to wear fur and fur substitutes in and out of season, allied with the utmost impartiality to flimsy ninon and heavy brocade. The cry of the moment is not, "Shall we wear it?" but "Is there any place new under the sun where we can use it?" And the reply is, "Under the sleeve." We find some of the advanced models for afternoon wear have their bell-shaped sleeves lined up with fur, and others have the hem of their skirts faced with fur, making a cosy, if ticklish, clothing for silken-clad legs. Apart from such eccentricities, however, fur has a decided use, as well as a charm, when encountered in the shape of lining for the elongated waistcoat to the walking suit.

This year a real feature will be made of fur for lining purposes, and even in cases where the long-waisted body part is silk or satin lined, the fulled-on basque will be faced with fur destined to show with the movement of the wearer. More patent to the eye is the fur used as a trimming pure and simple. I saw a duvetyn costume so barred with narrow lines of fur that it was practically covered with an open check patterning of the same. Another had wide pieces imposed on either hip to accentuate both the close-fitting lines of the upper part of the coat and the fulness of its skirt. Yet another had its sleeves from wrist to shoulder of fur, but this was a too clumsy effort after the unusual to be at all desirable.

Whole coats of fur show very little in the way of new lines, etc., the great shortage in skins probably accounting for this moderation on the part of furriers. Once more the demand is very greatly in excess of the supply, and many houses have had to refuse to purchase stocks in the rarer skins, as the prices demanded for the raw goods are so enormous that it becomes a matter of conjecture as to whether there will be any ultimate profit on the deal by the time the skins have been dressed and made up. Skunk, both for trimming coats and in the shape of sets, still comes out as first favourite. Here there is no need of hesitation on the part of the wholesale buyers, as there is always a ready market for the king of furs, easily the best wearing value whatever the price it realizes. The most popular wrap will be the cape design, that consists of handsome skins of whole animals of the larger type, blue kit fox being among the cheaper varieties promised a triumphant season.

The general line for coats and skirts will be that which is entirely slim for the upper part of the coat and quite full for the latter. The waistline, where defined, sinks lower and lower—a rule that applies also to frocks for day and evening wear. Simplicity is at the moment the keynote of the tailor-made costume, which, however, makes a great point of the line of its seams, which, as often as not, are so placed as practically to form a trimming in themselves. By them the narrow slim effect is still further accentuated, while in other cases the line may turn upwards from the head of the basque to follow the centre front, and then bend sideways towards the sleeves to simulate a yoke. A narrow belt is still to be seen in many models, but if this occurs at the natural waist the lower line is accentuated by some such means as pockets or the fluted *empiecements* that rival the plissé flounces in popularity.

The cassequin that has superseded to some extent the longer jumper is a most fascinating affair, which is open to all sorts of variations when handled by our American cousins. They have shown extraordinary ingenuity in dealing with the subject, and despite the apparently elaborate nature of many of their designs, the majority are cut in one piece out of forty-inch wide materials. Very fine gathers play a leading part in those of georgette and the thinner fabrics, tiny kiltings and minute buttons acting as trimming for the soft satin models. Of course, in many examples, the material itself is so beautiful that nothing further is required in the way of adornment, and it is to be noted that Chinese blues of all shades are the leading colour for all occasions.

The Magnetism of Beauty.

Sweet Nell of Old Drury and King Charles II.

UNIQUE PROCESS FOR RETAINING AND REGAINING BEAUTY.

By Mlle. Charlotte Sirier.

Does your skin chap or roughen easily, or become unduly red or blotchy? Let me tell you a quick and easy way to overcome the trouble and keep your complexion beautifully white, smooth, and soft. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at the chemist's, and use a little before retiring as you would use cold cream. The wax, through some peculiar action, flecks off the rough, discoloured, or blemished skin. The worn-out cuticle comes off just like dandruff on a diseased scalp, only in almost invisible particles. Mercolized wax simply hastens Nature's work, which is the rational and proper way to obtain a perfect complexion, so much sought after, but very seldom seen. The process is perfectly simple and quite harmless.

* * * * *

It is astounding the number of women who suffer from unsightly growths of hair on the face, and it will come as a piece of good news to know that there is a simple substance, known as powdered pheminol, which will remove it immediately and permanently. Mix a small quantity into a thin paste with a little water, and apply to the objectionable growths. In two minutes all trace of the hair will have entirely vanished, and your skin will be soft and smooth as a child's.

* * * * *

The hair should be allowed to breathe, and the greasy film around each strand must be removed with a mild, non-alkaline shampoo. Soaps should be tabooed. The very best solution for the purpose can be made by dissolving a teaspoonful of stallax granules in a cup of hot water. It stimulates the scalp to a healthy action, and at the same time leaves the hair in that soft, fluffy condition so much admired. Any chemist can supply you with an original packet of stallax, sufficient to make twenty-five or thirty shampoos.

* * * * *

One need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair-dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple, old-fashioned, and perfectly harmless home-made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tammalite concentrate, and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge, and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way.

AN IDEAL WEDDING PRESENT

Under the comprehensive title of "**The Whole Art of Dining and Table Decorations,**" a very handsome volume has recently been published at a guinea by Messrs. Carmona and Baker, of 5, Endell Street, W.C. 2, which should prove an ideal wedding gift for any bride whose future duties will include those of a society hostess and giver of dinner-parties and other social entertainments.

The book (written by Mr. J. Rey, author of "Le Guide du Gourmet" and other works on similar subjects) is also wonderfully interesting for diners-out and epicures; and the newly-fledged hostess will find it simply invaluable; for a guinea, ladies in society can obtain information for which many would pay quite substantial fees. There are chapters on the arrangements and style of service of luxurious dinners, wedding luncheons, ball suppers, garden parties, etc.; floral table decorations; the art of carving and the modern way of waiting at table (illustrated); how to prepare and serve the newest cocktails; wine-cups; beverages for large parties, etc.; the decanting and serving of fine wines at their proper temperature; the art of composing the menu for every conceivable occasion; and some very useful legal notes concerning both masters and servants, etc., etc. One of the most practical sections of the book is a full descriptive French menu dictionary, which comprises several thousands of fine French dishes, with their proper French names, explaining in English how cooked, garnished, dished-up, etc., etc.

These are but a few of the numerous interesting subjects contained in it.

The book is profusely illustrated with full-page photographs and coloured plates, including a fine collection of artistic dinner-tables decorated by experts and by well-known Society ladies.

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